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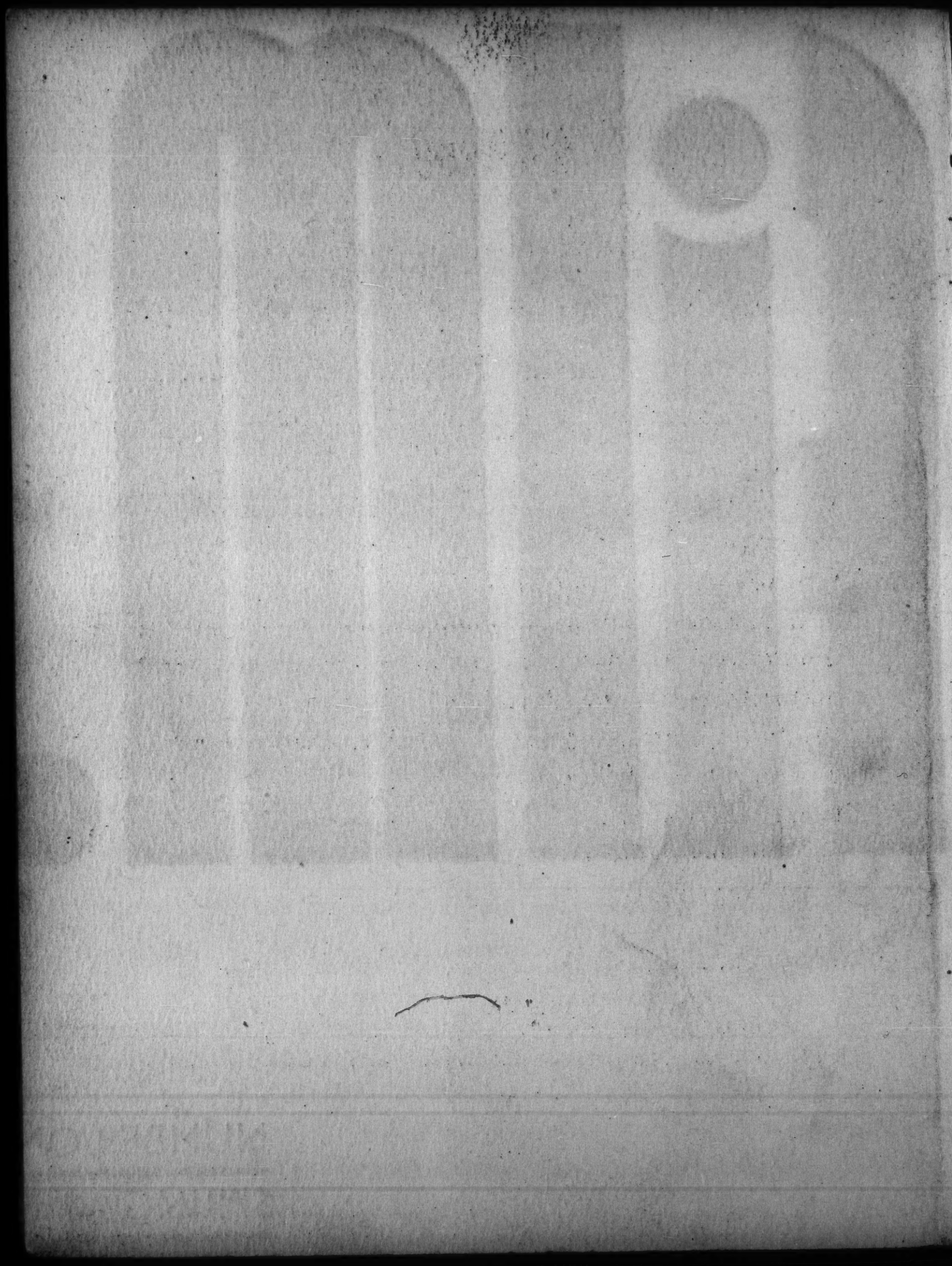

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number one **film.** spring 1933

SCRUTINY

BY THE EDITOR.

●

With the exception of two London cinemas there is not in England, as far as we know, a single cinema which has a record for showing consistently films which are not primarily made with an eye on the box-office. If, by chance, a cinema happens to show *Kameradschaft* or *Madchen in Uniform* one week, it shows *Blonde Venus* or *Rockabye* the next. The film public is treated as one, as if two book lovers who read Ethel M. Dell and James Joyce, respectively, were of the same mental capacity. To attempt to force intelligent films on a sensation seeking public would be ridiculous. There will always be a public for crime novels ; similarly will there always be one for Glamorous All-Star movies.

Rather than attempt to destroy a sensation seeking public, we wish to create a new one. This second public has, in the past, remained silent ; now it is hoped it will speak.

Only the narrow commercialised minds of the big entrepeneurs of cinema entertainment, confine good cinema going to such organisations as film societies.

The commercialisation of any art is its downfall, for commercialism disregards any aesthetic significance, and judges a product by its popularity in the field it caters for. The present day universally shown film is a totally unimaginative performance. A film is not to be despised because it makes money. The film to despise (and it forms the bulk of present day cinema) is that in which characters and incidents are given a vulgar glamour which is unlike life, and which is an insult to any standard of intelligence.

The public which is potentially interested in good films and which, furthermore, does not want to see inferior films at all, requires a certain amount of organisation and a guide. This, we feel, is part of our job. *Film* is not going to devote a certain amount of incidental space to good cinema, but is going to be entirely devoted to the film as an art. We shall seek a film-form, and attempt to solve problems which prevent a realisation of that film-form.

In our criticism we shall remain unbiased, and shall only consider the films which have a definite significance to film art. Although the film, or films, may, on the whole, be bad, we shall consider them if we think they will help our readers to understanding those things which constitute cinema in its purest form.

The publication of this quarterly is an entirely independent one. It has no outside financial backing whatsoever. We have issued this publication at a price that will just pay for its production, and we ask our readers to introduce it to anyone to whom they think its contents and purpose might be of interest. —

B. BRAUN.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE FILM

BY ROBERT FAIRTHORNE

Although artistic beliefs demand that knowledge of theory should be unconscious, it is a pity that both practical and theoretical workers should demonstrate this faith in print. The practical man of the film world has the same contempt for film theory as the village blacksmith has for theoretical metallurgy. Both know they can turn out better work than the theorists, and both prove the uselessness of theories by brandishing their own.

Some conflict between practical and theoretical tendencies is essential for sound achievement, but in the cinema the conflict is partly due to the fact that neither theorist nor applicant seem to know what a theory is, and what it can, or cannot, do. Another cause of trouble is the general belief that film theory began and ended with Kuleshoff's attack on the principles of construction. To prevent better brains wasting time by upsetting the already unstable Kuleshoffian Aunt Sally, this article attempts to sum up the development of film theory to the present day.

There is a qualitative difference between the film of to-day and the film of, say, twelve years ago, quite apart from the presence of sound. This is not due to any change in the themes, which remain one or other of the immortal three, nor to technical advances affecting technique. The only two technical developments worthy of notice, apart from the invention of photographic cinematography, are the camera truck (first used in Swedish films in about 1918, but too generally adopted after the success of Dupont's *Vaudeville*), and the addition of sound. The former had the more profound influence on the nature of films, for it helped to distinguish a film from the stage and the lantern lecture.

The film of to-day differs from the film of yesterday in the theoretical principles of its construction, and this difference is greater than that caused by the coming of sound. The film of the past was a photographed stage play. It would have remained so,—the public found it adequate—but for the fact that films have to be made. The actual making of a film, as opposed to its inception, demands intelligence and technical ability, qualities which imply, in spite of contemporary social mythology, some artistic qualifications. Thus it comes about that, though mostly the film industry exists by doing well what is not worth doing at all, the theory of film construction possesses a certain narrow and thumby thoroughness.

The number of formulated theories is in excess of the number of theorists, but the principles affecting general practice have been evolved from them and from experiment—or fashion. In practice they work fairly adequately but, owing to their fundamental unsoundness, they can only be applied to immediate problems. Like all machine-shop theories, they are almost useless for prediction

or for other than routine problems. Their effect is natural, for the problem of film construction has been attacked before investigating the formal properties of the material. In fact the material has never even been described.

Until recently a film was made by placing the camera in the front row of the stalls, and then presenting to the audience a potted version of the camera's evening out. The film was a two-dimensional monochromatic version of the stage, sometimes enlivened by camera tricks. Well done it was terribly boring, but at its worst was excellent entertainment, till shackled by dialogue.

Dramatic episodes, linked by redundant and sometimes explanatory lettering, were the basis of the film till well after the War. They would be still, frozen stiffer by acoustic technique, if the technicians had not unconsciously evolved a new conception. It is worth noting that progress comes first in the short film, generally the " comic," where experiments are looked at as legitimate eccentricity. This is particularly noticeable at the moment.

The credit for the new conception cannot be given to any one man. It was actually articulated by Kuleshoff, in 1920. The principle was simple and obvious, but ran athwart the idea of the film as a theatrical record with elaborate settings. In it the strips of film, or rather, the visual impressions resulting therefrom were the material only. They had only visual significance. The image of an elephant walking down the street was an image of an elephant walking down the street, and nothing more. Intellectual significance, even the most direct, was formed by the relations of an image to the other images forming the film ; like the letters of a word, they had significance in combination not deducible from their separate meanings. The making of a film was supposed to begin, after the photography, with the cutting and editing. It was the subjection of the camera by the Sickle. Eisenstein added the Hammer later.

In Kuleshoff's view the recording of incident was a preliminary, the film incident being synthetized from the records as sentences are from words. Some of his demonstrations were crude but amusing, and may be unfamiliar to the uninitiated. In one he created the impression of a moving woman by consecutive presentation of close-ups of the arms, legs, head, and body of different women, photographed at different times and in different places. In another, a shot was made of an actor looking at something off the screen. This was placed in three parts of the film where it was followed by shots of a plate of food, a dead man, and a woman respectively. Although the actor had the same neutral expression on his face in all three shots, the audience was impressed by his acting, or so the story goes. Thus " stars " are made.

The virtue of this theory of construction was that it recognized the film as depending more on the interaction of its parts than on the content of the parts themselves. This merit was, and is still, obscured by lack of clear thought in its exposition. As usual, the implicit assumption was made that the film consists of strips of celluloid. It was also implied that a visual event was altered only in duration by shortening its celluloid equivalent, as if a man were only altered in height by having his head cut off.

None of these errors alter the truth of the importance of ordinal relations, and the lack of importance of the camera as such, but these were the errors which were hailed as the basis of the theory. Their cruder manifestations, unlike those of the theatrical film, were not amusing. In the more esoteric circle appeared films so crammed with irrelevant shots, giving alleged significance by contrast or comparison, that there was some suspicion that they were put in to make it more difficult. Though there is no *a priori* objection to shots in negative or upside down, they require some justification.

In Oziga Vertov's *The Man with the Movie Camera* the cameraman himself is shown at work, a scene as factitious as anything in a *spielfilm*. This part of the theory, the Kino-Eye, can never be carried into practice, for " real " material is inevitably manipulated by the very process of obtaining it. Which side of the lens the manipulation takes place is a matter of indifference.

Because of the increasing importance of the documentary film, it is as well to clear up the error in Vertov's dichotomy. The clue lies in the fact that a " real photograph " has no more significance than an artist's picture to an audience *having no previous acquaintance with the photographic process*. " Actuality " is not a fundamental property, but a relation between film and audience of precisely the same order as slow motion, which demands previous knowledge of natural motion to give its peculiar effect.

The value of Vertov's work does not lie in his theory of the Kino-Eye, but in his theory of the assembly of the film. Having no control over the secondary visual characteristics of the material he collected, he was forced to make the interaction of the content of the film events more powerful than their appearance. This was done by impressing a more or less temporal metric on the film, to echo, emphasize, or run contrapuntal to the intellectual relations. The principle was used by Eisenstein in *Ten Days that shook the World*, and for the first time with sound, to which the method it is peculiarly applicable, in Milestone's *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

When the metrical construction was over-applied it destroyed itself. It is possible to inflict on the film temporal relations so complicated that they can only be ascertained by measuring up the celluloid with a footrule, but they are not necessarily rhythms. Also the visual content must be considered. Film rhythm is spatial as well as temporal, and the duration of a shot and its visual content interact on each other. In fact, the duration of the film events can only be controlled before they are made. Understanding would be helped by some term implying both *pattern* and *rhythm*.

From such considerations Eisenstein arrived at his idea of Overtonal Montage. The theory, as stated by the originator, is somewhat complex. So complex, indeed, that one suspects it of being an explanation rather than a tool. This may be so, but does not affect the value of the theory, which is considerable, or its truth, which is at least partial.

Briefly, Eisenstein recognizes a hierarchy of methods of assembly. These will be referred to as montage methods, with the understanding that the

montage is not to be confused with film splicing. Each montage operates on the results of the last in such a way as to co-ordinate the significances of the action with the visual qualities of the images. Going up the series the significances concerned become more diffuse, and the co-ordinated visual qualities intrinsic rather than predominant. It is worth noting that the visual, not the pictorial qualities, are those considered. The film image cannot possess pictorial qualities as commonly understood, for it has both duration and direction in time. It is a visual event, not a picture—not even a moving picture.

Kuleshoff's synthesis of a woman is an example of the lowest order of montage. The order and predominant characteristics of the events were combined to achieve the immediate purpose of the film, the representation of a woman. The next step is to combine the result of the last so as to fit the durations into the dramatic action. *This is Metric Montage.* Above this is formed the metric of the metric, or rhythm, which combines the significance of the action with the motions in the ordered film images. Above the rhythmic lies the tonal montage, of which a purely spatial example is the deliberate use of " camera angle." We are now free of any superstition that the film can be made at the cutting desk. The final stage is what Eisenstein calls Overtonal Montage, the analogy being with the musical theories of Scriabin and Debussy. In it the screen images are treated as psychical stimuli having no individual significance, only their integrated effect being subjected to the process of montage. The direct action of the film is carried by the dominant qualities of the images, while the significance and appeal are conveyed by the summation of diffuse qualities below the level of awareness. In much the same way a printer uses different type faces, whose distinctive appearance is due to the summation of minute differences separately unnoticed by the reader. There is a verbal parallel in the methods of James Joyce.

Concentration on the more diffuse qualities of film components, rather than on the still fundamental primary qualities of action and duration, has led to a very great apparent simplification of the rhythmic structure. At its best, the rhythmic construction could give a flavour of Bach to the film, at its worst it produced a kinetic patchwork. Only in an abstract film should the structure overshadow the content.

Though the pragmatic correctness of overtonal montage is a matter of experience, and though it seems to be a necessary consequence of the properties of film material, the greatest objection to it, as used by Eisenstein, is that it is frankly hypnotic. If the hypnosis is unsuccessful there is an emotional dislike to the film. Thus *The General Line*, which dealt with the unemotional and almost politically neutral subject of collective farming, caused greater commotion in this country than frankly revolutionary films like *The End of St. Petersburg.* Possibly this is only a defect of present day Soviet mentality, or is intrinsic in the nature of the purpose for which such films are made. The method certainly

seems to attract propagandists of all countries and creeds.

Since the statement of Overtonal Montage, theory has remained inarticulate, though there is evidence of the growth of a purely practical and implicit understanding of film material. The coming of sound led to a number of wild statements, by courtesy, theoretical. They are not worth comment, or the trouble of looking them up, as they made no attempt to analyse the nature of the visual-acoustic. Although a visual event combined with an acoustic event is something more than the sum of the two, the formal qualities of the combination can be understood from study of the formal properties of the components and the nature of the cross relations between them. The mildly mathematical will see the analogy with complex numbers. The comparative structural simplicity of acoustic events makes them most suitable for controlled use in the higher orders of the Eisenstein montage hierarchy.

On the constructive side film theory of to-day is useful without being theoretical. The few feeble attempts at fundamental analysis are too ludicrous for criticism. The absurdity of " motion composition " implies that there is no distinction between the beginning and end of a film event, and theories that cannot see anything odd in a film run backwards, should be rejected at sight.

A worse fault in practice, is the lack of research into available material. The range of the film is all visual and acoustic experience. Even visual experience is by no means confined to the representational. This article is visual experience, if nothing else, but it is not representational. Possible visual material ranges from the abstract pattern event (a somewhat ideal conception) having sharp visual and diffuse intellectual significances, to the verbal typographic events, having sharp intellectual and diffuse visual significances. The classification of visual and acoustic material can be left, in the manner of text books, as an exercise for the reader. No distinction can be made between " documentary " and " studio " shots in a fundamental classification, for the distinction depends on a relation between film and audience.

The only film theorist to use non-representational methods was *Felix the Cat*. His habit of interchanging typographical symbols with reality was probably a manifestation of the scientific and economic spirit of the age.

In conclusion, a prediction. In about eight years stereoscopy, variable screen openings, colour, and the like, will have ruined film achievement by finding the practical men of the cinema influenced by *fashion* instead of *understanding*. A small, but dreadful, example is the current fashion in scene changing. There are two conventions—the Steinbergian sleepy sickness mix, and the British geometrical wipe of the duster. Apparently the employers of these methods are so blind to the basic principles of the cinema film that they fail to realise the transition from one scene to another to be a separate scene in itself.

MONTAGE

BY ORLTON WEST

Film *editing* means, simply, the putting together or assembling of pieces of film. *Montage* is editing with a conscious purpose behind it. A news reel is merely edited and not mounted, since its scenes and sequences are no more inter-dependent than items on a programme. Montage would only enter into the process if the pieces of film were indispensable one to another, and if they were assembled according to some preconceived plan.

The montage principle is not solely confined to the film.

Impressionist and cubist painters employ it when they sketch fragments of objects, and weld them together to form a unified whole. Photographers employ it in photo-montage, in which a group of apparently unrelated pictures, when put side by side, explode into a new concept, and attain a single significance. They create a montage effect.

Montage effects from the cinema screen are dependent upon two fundamental principles—filmic space and filmic time. Both have been known to the film director ever since the cinematograph was invented, and utilised for creating illusions of railway accidents, vanishing figures, etc.

The camera is turned on an empty room, and stopped while a man enters the room. A second scene is then taken with the man before the camera. Upon joining and projecting these two pieces of film, the camera pause is eliminated, and the man appears suddenly upon the screen.

The illusion of *filmic time* has been created.

Again, a poster bearing the words DOWN WITH WAR is photographed in London; and a crowd cheering football players in New York. If these two scenes be joined and projected, the crowd will appear to be cheering the poster instead of the football players, who are not shown. London and New York will have been amalgamated on the screen.

The illusion of *filmic space* will have been created.

It is upon the basis of this filmic space-time, peculiar to the cinematographic medium, that montage, or constructive editing is based.

Ermler, when making *Fragment of an Empire*, photographed scenes in various Russian cities, but for the purposes of the film, synthesised them into a single mighty city—an imaginary structure in filmic space.

In *Potemkin*, S. M. Eisenstein succeeded in making a stone lion spring to its feet and roar. The shots were assembled as follows :—

1. Title :
   " And the rebel battleship answered the brutality of the tyrant with a shell upon the town."
2. A slowly and deliberately turning gun-turret is shown.

3. Title :
" Object—the Odessa Theatre."
4. Marble group at the top of the theatre building.
5. Title :
" On the General's Headquarters."
6. Shot from the gun.
7. In two very short shots the marble figure of Cupid is shown above the gates of the building.
8. A mighty explosion. The gates totter.
9. Three short shots, a stone lion sleeping, a stone lion with open eyes, and a rampant stone lion.
10. A new explosion, shattering the gates.

The single scene, that is the single visual image, on the screen is the basis of film construction, just as the word is of poetry. Scenes are built up into sequences exactly as words are into lines of poetry. Again, just as words which terminate the lines of a poem are chosen to rhyme, so the shots in a sequence are selected according to similarities of length, photographic composition, or the motional or static content of their images.

Consider three shots : a child running : a dog running : a ball rolling swiftly along the ground. These three scenes might form a sequence for their common characteristics of " speed " or " running."

Or consider five scenes, all photographed from above : a match box : cigar box : packing trunk : coffin : flat roofed house (as seen from a height). Such a sequence may not make dramatic sense, but it serves to show that the five shots share a number of common characteristics. All the objects are of similar shape, and all stationary. Since each object is successively larger than the one preceding, a tendency, a movement, of growth is created from the tiny match box to the large house. Thus by association of five individually static images, an effect of motion is created.

Compare this with the example of the stone lions.

Both are purely montage effects peculiar to the cinematographic process.

S. M. Eisenstein's term *Metric Montage* indicates that film pieces are joined strictly in accordance to their length. Each of a series of shots so assembled would therefore occupy the screen for exactly the same length of time. Dziga Vertov constructs some of his sequences of strips consisting of only two frames (individual pictures). The order of the pieces is not determined by their content, which may remain the same for all of them.

A crowd of shouting people might be represented cinematically by a series of scenes of equal length each showing the face of a shouting person.

The length of pieces may vary according to a simple plan, as the time value of notes in a bar of music. Thus the above sequence could be complicated by the introduction of longer scenes showing a speaker addressing the crowd. The rhythmic effect would then be similar to an uneven drum beat—112, 112, 112. " 2 " *representing the shot of the speaker.*

In *Rhythmic Montage* the *content* of pieces is the guiding principle of their association. The above example of " running " or " speed " scenes illustrates a case of rhythmic montage. These scenes might each be one foot long and metrically similar, but they might be all of different lengths, as they would be if the ball, the child, and the dog approached and passed the camera at varying speeds.

Rhythmic, as distinct from Metric, Montage expresses a tendency, usually of motion. Thus additions to the above sequence of scenes showing a cyclist moving at moderate speed, a fast car, and a very fast racing car, would give it a very powerful tendency to " acceleration of speed "—from the running child to the racing car.

Eisenstein introduced Tonal and Overtonal Montage into the construction of his film *The General Line* (Old and The New), and the whole question of Montage covers a much wider field than this article. However, I hope to discuss these matters in the future. Also, if the Russian, or indeed any films influenced by the Russian technique, are examined with a knowledge of sequence structure as explained above, some cinematic methods used will be more easily understood.

FILM SOCIETIES

BY JUDITH TODD

There are several ways of being interested in the cinema. (i) You may regard it as a commodity, even if you drape it with Ideals. (You remember Mr. Neck, in Stella Gibbons' *Cold Comfort Farm :* " We gotta responsibility to the public. We gotta give them what they want, but we gotta keep it clean. Boy, it's difficult.") (ii) You may treat it, approvingly or disapprovingly, as a propaganda weapon. (iii) And you may treat it as Art or as a toy. Number three is the method that belongs to Film Societies. Members of these who flock on Sunday afternoon to something foreign or " unusual " must not mind being classed in the same category as the sub-standard producing societies whose chief aim is to ape Hollywood. In the writer's opinion it is as profitless merely to look at good films as it is to produce bad ones, and as much a sign of vanity to chat about Dziga-Vertov as to want to see yourself on the screen.

Exhibiting Film Societies (as distinct from producing ones, which are usually called ciné clubs) must have some reason for existing. The original one was to shew to members films which they could not otherwise see. It seems to me that it is now time to look further, and to make it possible for the general—or rather a general—public to see these films : the logical corollary of the London Film Society was the Academy Cinema. That is not to say that Film Societies should vanish altogether, for the curiousness of our censorship laws makes them as necessary as the Sunday play societies. But I do suggest that they should realise that they are at present fulfilling two functions : that of shewing films and that of understanding cinema. The latter, to which far too little attention has been given, is the active side and implies far more then shewing

films ; it must, of course, include making them, which is at present largely left to the ciné clubs. It is time that Film Societies began to rid themselves of the first part of the burden.

For I presume that they want to do this ; it would be more agreeable for everyone to be able to go to an ordinary cinema with a reasonable hope of seeing decent films, at a more accessible hour and with greater frequency than a Film Society can be expected to run shows, to say nothing of the release of the Society's funds for its second object. Now the best means of obtaining this end is that serious attention should be given to canalising the efforts of the various sections of opinion which are dissatisfied with the commercial cinema. The Societies have begun this by building up their membership ; let them go on to the object of establishing a repertory cinema in their towns—at least, let them put this forward as an object to be obtained in conjunction with the other interests. For Film Societies, except when they have yearned indiscriminately for " Russian Films," have had a positive idea of what they have wanted ; most of the other sections have only negative and inconsistent dislikes. For instance, the most vocal criticism of the commercial cinema comes from the professional discerners of corruption, whose chief objection to it is that it deals with Sex, and is therefore immoral ! What they ignore is that sex is only part of its scheme of morals, which may be codified as : Thou shalt not be found out. Devil take the hindmost. Be a Good Mixer. These three deadly virtues of capitalist morality are admired by the same people who condemned *The Blue Angel* as " another of those dreadful sex films."

But the complainers have no idea what they would substitute for films of purple passion and languorous licence. This is where the positive work of a Film Society should come in. It is too early to say what help may come from the Film Institute, which has just issued an extremely generalised list of objects. Its existence, however, may be of use as a background to local activities, for driving home the proof that there are potentially several different film publics. After all, no one expects to find *Théatre inexprimé* in a music-hall, or Legs in a repertory theatre. Yet we have to put up with the same Stupendous All-star Super-productions at every cinema for weeks at a time, till they are replaced by a new set. Miss Elsie Cohen, at the Academy Cinema, London, has proved that the specialised audience can be tapped. I suggest that since she has proved that it can be done, her example is likely to be followed, provided that Film Societies make it their business to see that the specialised audience is ready. *

The position of the ciné clubs is different. From the examples of their work one would say that they exist, and will exist, chiefly as a means of using up film. Hence their name, as they start from the apparatus end, and are good customers of the makers of and dealers in cinematograph apparatus.

The 16 mm. camera in the right hands, is no toy. The pity is that the Film Societies, in concentrating on the exhibiting side, have not made more use of it for inexpensive experimental work.

* *Cf. also C.A. Lejeune's article in " The Observer," of March 26th, where she speaks of Gaumont British's willingness to respond to organised demand for special pictures.*

??? Really!

FILM REVIEW

DER TRÄUMENDE MUND

Direction .... Paul Czinner.
Photography .... Kreuger.
Production .... Matador Film.
With Elisabeth Bergner, Anton Edthofer, Rudolf Forster.

This is the first of Czinner's sound films we, in England, have had a chance to see. His other, which also featured Elisabeth Bergner, was *Ariane*, and was banned by the censor.

Unfortunately, in *Der Traumende Mund* the quality one admires is not its value as cinema, but its marvellous acting. In particular that of Elisabeth Bergner, who plays the part of a musician's wife who is torn between the love for her husband and another violinist. The acting is so good that one is entirely absorbed at the time, and the film's genuine sincerity deserves admiration. However, from the point of view of good cinema, it means little. In particular a concert scene, where tempo is used as a psychological aid, is slightly overdone, and tends to become wearisome by continual repetition. Film acting alone, however great, cannot make a film, any more than mere scenery can make a play, or colour alone, a painting. There is, of course, the assiduous principle peculiar to the medium in question. But there is little application of this assiduousness in Paul Czinner's film. Apparently acting is his first consideration and construction his second. Consequently we have a film which as an exposition of Elisabeth Bergner's acting means a lot, and, as a piece of cinema, shows little except Czinner's power over his actors.

Nevertheless it is worth seeing, and there certainly are several brilliant sequences which one does not soon forget.

EMIL UND DIE DETEKTIVE

Direction .... Gerhard Lamprecht.
Photography .... Werner Brandes.
Music .... Allan Grey.
With Fritz Rasp, Rolf Wenkhaus, Inge Landgut.

Emil und die Detektive is certainly one of the most perfect, exhilarating and delightful sound films London has seen for some time. Mention of montage, and the like, sound out of place when writing of this comedy, about a boy who travels alone from Neustadt with money for his grandmother, and his adventures *en route* to Berlin, but that is because they are perfected. One should not be directly aware of brilliant cutting or well chosen camera-angles. They are there because they must be there, and therefore demand acceptance.

The brilliant mounting of the first scenes, combined with perfect sound, leading to the incident where a statue is insulted by Emil and Co., show that Lamprecht not only knew the emotions of young boys, their habits, their likes and dislikes, their fear of a policeman, their love for adventure, but that he also knew much about film technique. The almost surréalistic sequence of the boy's delirium is quite perfect. The expanding corridors, the madman eating his hat, the attempted pulling of the communication handle, the arrival in Berlin and the final accumulative crescendo when consciousness is regained, are the work of one with a marvellous imagination, and a very cinematic mind.

The characters, in particular Young Tuesday with his hound, Gustav-with-the-motor-horn, and the delightful Flying Stag ever with his mustang scooter, and who only speaks Cherokee-Indian, are wonderful types and their acting equally wonderful. No man was more suited to the part of the " man with the bowler hat " than Fritz Rasp. As he sits in the train our feelings are, as Emil's, of sinister fear and mental discomfort.

Brandes camerawork is brilliant, and what is of extreme importance, *Emil und die Detektive*, is a sound film. When following Emil and the gang along the street there are no shrieking motor-horns, shouting people, and cards imitating vacuum cleaners, but just a pleasant rhymical flowing music which, instead of distracting our eyes from the scene, is, as it should be in a sound film, a sound adjunct to the visual image.

LE SANG D'UN POETE

Direction	Jean Cocteau.
Photography	George Perinal.
Music	Georges Auric.

M. Cocteau's film almost defies criticism by the sheer validity of its cinematic conception. Surréalisme on which, to some extent, the significance of this film relies, demands a completely free and unbiased play of thought. The appearance of unusual images of any kind should not, therefore, be questioned. More than this. The perfect surréaliste film should not even arouse any emotions which would make the onlooker question anything in it. The images, the symbols, should demand acceptance, as they surely would if they were genuine. That is where *Le Sang d'un Poète* is perfect. The film is almost hypnotic, and the first part—the wounded hand or the poet's scars—is uncanny in its intensity. In part three—the battle of the snowballs—there is an indefinable barbarity, and in this, and the following sequence, the unnoticed disappearance of the statue, and the gradual transition of a street to a theatre, is to be found the real representation of dream— of unbiased thought, free from all aesthetic and moral preoccupations.

Certain parts, and especially the end, I, for one, did not absorb, but a film like this probably needs seeing more than once.

Le Sang d'un Poète (and such films as Bunuel's *Chien Andalou* and Dulac's *Coquille et le Clergyman*), show that the cinema, with its possibilities for superimposition, negative projection, dissolves, etc., is particularly adaptable to the representation of surréalistic emotions. To give an example: In the beginning of *Le Sang d'un Poète* a man is doing a charcoal drawing of a woman's head. Suddenly the mouth on the drawing moves; there is a violent knocking on the door, and the man rubs out the mouth with his hand. And later, as he washes his hand in a basin, he finds the mouth on his hand, speaking to him. It is not the sensational idea of a hand with a mouth, that affects one, but the realisation of the fact that here is a man on whose hand there is a mouth which can talk, and over which he has no control. Such vital and intense ideas are predominant throughout the entire film.

EVEREST

Direction and Photography .... Captain Noel.

This is a film in photographic material above the average, but indifferently treated. Some of the shots are prolonged meaninglessly to fit the author's commentary when their effect would best be realised by judicious cutting. The commentary, too, is overdone. It is not necessary to expiate upon the beauties of a subject which are self-apparent. A great opportunity was lost in the last few feet by cutting a beautiful scene of the gradual creeping shadows on the mountain, to a pointless and ineffective shot of the camp.

The film is accompanied by original Tibetan music. Interesting in theory, but ineffective in practice. The thin reedy notes of the single horn were insufficient interpretation of the swurling cloud wreath, immense ridges, and towering heights.

With *Everest* a chance has been lost; it could have been a straightforward, honest, genuine and sincere document of man's everlasting struggle against nature. But, except for a few beautiful scenes of sun and mountain, the film hardly seems worthy of the great effort expended on its taking.

ARABELLA HAYNE.

PRED MATURITOU

Direction	Svatopluk Innemann.
Assistant Direction	F. Jerhot.
Interior Photography	Otto Heller.
Exterior Photography	Vaclav Vich.
Music	E. F. Burian.
Production	A-B Film Limited, Prague.

The theme of *Pred Maturitou* is not unlike that of Leontine Sagan's *Madchen in*

Uniform. It lacks the depth and understanding of the latter film, but has the advantage of being more cinematic in conception.

As a whole its length is cumbersome, and it has a stupid conventional happy ending. But if Innemann were to cut parts of the film again, and exclude certain unnecessary and prolonged sequences, *Pred Maturitou* would probably be a very notable film. As it is, it has many virtuous qualities and, what is more, it shows that we must, in future, watch Czecho-Slovakia's cinema.

It can clearly be seen that the director had a definite understanding of film essentials. Slow motion, quick-cutting, rhythm and, above all, a clear and definite film-montage, or arranging of scenes, are all applied with thought and imagination. The scenes at Lake Macha are excellent and, combined with superb photography, they give a lovely feeling of exhilaration and airiness. A feeling experienced by the boys and girls themselves, as this visit to the lake is an annual school outing.

A satirical note is introduced with the master's conference and is rather out of place with the mood of this section, and therefore merely obtains the crude when the subtle is intended.

Pred Maturitou is not a masterpiece of cinema, but definitely a film to see. There are sections which, as such, are notable examples of film art. It is very possible that the film will be shown in London shortly.

TOUR DE CHANT

Direction	Alberto Cavalcanti.
Photography	P. Engberg.
Songs	Stretti and Villard.
Cartoons	J. Vare.
Production	Compagnie Universelle Cinematographique.

This pleasant "short," which will soon be shown at the Academy Cinema, London, is worthy of attention mainly on account of its director. Cavalcanti has always been more of a painter than a cineaste ; this being easily seen by the deliberate pictorialism of *En Rade*, *Le Capitaine Fracasse*, and his other films. *Tour de Chant* is a musical film, but not, fortunately, of the usual calibre. In one section a sentimental love duet is being sung, and illustrated cinematically. The continuous insertion of gutters, drains, and house-tops, as symbols, immediately labels Cavalcanti as a recruit from the ranks of the French avant-garde. This latter was a group of young men who, between about 1924 and 1928, turned out, independently, a number of absolute, abstract films which, although to an extent experimental, were valuable contributions to film art.

There is certainly nothing advanced about *Tour de Chant*, but it is a pleasing little film, and interesting for the aforementioned reasons.

Continued on page 20

THE FILM'S GRIM PROGRESS

BY ANDREW BUCHANAN.

Is the Film making progress ? I asked myself the question as I stood trembling in awe before the mighty pillars and golden arches leading into a modern cinema, which towered above the city, a tempting temple beside which the palaces of the Pharaohs would have looked just like Council houses.

Is the Film making progress ? The question floated round and round my brain as, plucking up courage, I passed through the shining doors, whereupon my feet sank completely out of sight in carpets costing pounds an inch. Heaven at last, I murmured in error, as I caught sight of a group of golden and very swollen angels, from the tops of whose heads coloured water spouted, for no apparent reason. Suddenly, from out of mirrored walls a god-like Being appeared, who easily dwarfed King Kong. He was arrayed in a uniform studded with diamonds, and wore velvet plus eights. Casting a horrified glance in my direction, he signalled with one eyebrow to another god, obviously his inferior, for his coat was decorated merely with rubies, and this Being beckoned me with a twitch of his little finger. And so my pilgrimage began, along endless corridors lined with statues basking in an eternal green dawn—on, on, through avenues of fountains supported cruelly on the abdomens of gilded youths, until we were confronted by a wicked looking fairy queen with silver hair. To my horror, the celestial Being left me alone with her. She must have hypnotised me, for, hours later, I found myself following her along very dark corridors, the floors of which were of crystal, through which lights glimmered mysteriously. And then, from somewhere in the distance I heard a metallic voice shout out "GEE, BABY, YOU'RE MINE," and I knew I was at long last approaching the great Inner Temple, into which only those who have paid the price may enter. An hour or so later and I stood before the mighty platinum and onyx frame in which a film would appear, but not until an organist who had ascended from the lower regions, seeking forgiveness, finished his solo, and had descended again, having sought in vain. Only then did the Temple become darkened, and the Film appeared. For a long time, the screen was filled with lots of very queer names of people, all of whom had had a great deal to do with its production, so that it was quite impossible to lay the guilt at any particular person's feet. I leave the rest to your imagination, because I lost mine on the long journey back. Has the Film progressed ? A ridiculous question, I thought, as I mentally compared that sumptuous palace with the tiny converted garages of fifteen years ago, in which I used to enjoy Broncho Billy and Flora Finch, for threepence. Of course it has progressed, though not necessarily in the right direction. In every material way it has advanced beyond expectations, and technically, the Film is flawless. The perfection of noiseless recording, of photography, of settings, of projection—

these, together with all the countless mechanical details that have been marshalled to create the perfect clockwork illusion, leave one bewildered. The triumphant technician has been embraced by the showman, and together they have created Commercial Success. Money is being made, millions are being entertained, and that is all there is about it. But immediately a medium of expression becomes a commercial proposition, and develops accordingly, catering as it must for the vast majority, the minority begin to lament the lack of aesthetic values in its productions, the absence of intelligence, of art, rhythm, sincerity, beauty, and most of all, that the majority of people are ignorant of the fact that the productions they enjoy lack all these vital things. Has it not always been so ? Two opposite camps, one vast, the other just a little tent housing a handful of people who, in this instance, want to remould the Film to their own definitely intellectual ideals. The question is, would such a transformation deprive the Film of its entertaining qualities ? Could it be just as thrilling or as funny if created by the cineaste ? If not, it would fail commercially, for it would not entertain. Many films of an " advanced " nature do not entertain, and were never intended to do so. Moreover, those who pay to see them do not seek entertainment in the accepted sense of the word. It looks, therefore, as if there must be two distinct groups—one, intellectual, desiring food for thought, the other, well .....

I have been led to this conclusion since the considerable increase in really intelligent films which are being well patronised. Some say such success proves that the public are beginning to prefer intellectual productions, but I am inclined to think that the people who, in increasing numbers, are going to such films have not been recruited from the ranks of the film-fans, but from the battalions of people who, until such films appeared, never entered cinemas. This being so, the vast majority remains intact, to the relief of commercial studios. Could there ever be one public for both Ethel M. Dell and Huxley, for Eugene O'Neill and Ben Travers, or for Eisenstein and De Mille ? In the next world, perhaps, where all intelligences may be raised or lowered or merged, but not here. But that is no reason why film studios should not revolutionise their methods and start to CREATE pictures instead of manufacturing them, by giving precedence to minds over machines, and, more particularly, to one mind over twenty machines, for the nearer commercial and " non-commercial " films come together, the happier we shall be. All of which rather infers that there must be something wrong with film production, and yet, looking inside a modern studio, with its marvellous equipment and expert technicians, one is somewhat at a loss to know what is wrong, or, on the other hand, what is right. In my opinion, most studios are prisons, outside the walls of which the countless captives rarely venture, so that they never see the sun, nor smell the earth. They are unconscious of the fact that the world is full of settings which art directors cannot reproduce. They have forgotten the sea, the hills, the cobbled streets, the crowded streets, the factories and the great motoring roads. They think

only in terms of a cardboard Cornwall. There are far too many people at work on each film, and far too many films. The production of films savours too greatly of an industry governed by mass production, with one man carrying on from where the last one left off. The scenarist finishes at the point where the director begins, and the latter only steps in when the art director has finished, and the cameraman has had his say. The cutter does not awake until much later on. Surely there is something very wrong about all that ?

And there are too many novels being misrepresented, and too many plays being shot at dawn. Meanwhile the story of life itself remains to be told in the settings which Mother Earth has so generously provided. As they cost nothing, however, they are regarded with suspicion. And in the story of Life are all the tales the studios will ever need, and in these lie the future and strength of the Film beautiful. What I have said applies to films from all countries, for I recognise no such thing as a British film, nor an American film. I only know good and bad films, and I know the latter variety very well indeed.

Nevertheless, it is utterly wrong to despise commercialism in the film business, for it is vital to its existence. One's aim, as I see it, should be to divert its power to better ends.

Is the Film making progress ? Of course.

THE VOICE OF THE WORLD

Direction	Arthur Elton.
Photography	George Noble.
Production	New Era Productions Limited.

Here we have a document stating plain facts and bothering more about impression than detail.

It starts with a world without wireless, and emphasises the boredom experienced by those who live away from, or cannot afford, entertainment. The film is notable for its careful construction and its somewhat jerky tempo, owing to the treatment of its subject. A high-speed tempo at the beginning slackens off as wireless becomes a fact and no mere experiment. Then starts again when manufacture commences—then stops to illustrate wireless research—then, as a grand finale, it burst into a film representation of wireless programmes and their effect on listeners. In many ways it is similar to Iven's *Philip's Radio*. The whole is well photographed, and the sound (music to fit the visual images) is effectively used.

A.H.

DEGENERATION OF DIRECTORS

BY T. D. GRIFFIN BEALE

Many film directors of both imagination and intellect have become the puppets of the production executives to be manipulated in accordance with the undulated whims of the producers' idea of what the public requires; this being based upon the formula of last year's successes plus the momentary value of certain " stars."

Many European directors have attempted to adapt themselves to the making of films in the mechanised film city, Hollywood.

Among them may be mentioned F. W. Murnau, whose German films *Dracula*, *Tartuffe*, *Faust* and *The Last Laugh*, were wonderful examples of filmic construction, particularly the latter film, which was told entirely by visual images and was notable for the masterly acting of Emil Jannings. In 1926, he went to Hollywood to make films for the Fox Film Company and swiftly deteriorated with such stereotyped movies as *Sunrise*, *Four Devils*, and *City Girl*. Prior to his death as the result of a motor accident in 1931, he made *Tabu* in conjunction with R. Flaherty. This privately-produced film was very different to Murnau's previous work, being set almost entirely in the open air. His German films were studio reconstructions, and this film proved that it was the American producers with their single track minds, that had prevented him from maintaining his previous standard of direction.

Ludwig Berger is another director who has floundered in America. He was responsible in Germany for that exquisite film *Cinderella*. He went to the States in 1928, where he made *The Woman from Moscow*, which was merely an excuse for spectacular settings and contained nothing of any cinematic value.

With the coming of sound, he concocted *The Vagabond King*, a very clumsily directed film, and it was apparent that Berger was labouring under extreme difficulties.

Lubitsch has fared a little (but only a little) better in America than his *confrères*. With *Forbidden Paradise* he managed, by himself, to convert a theme that was originally just another Ruritanian melodrama into a vitriolic commentary upon the entire American movie system.

But one swallow does not make a summer, for, since *Forbidden Paradise*, have come such films as *The Student Prince*, renowned for its sloppy sentiment, and *The Patriot*, probably his worst film. Had it not been for the credit titles announcing the fact that the direction was by Ernst Lubitsch one would not have connected the film with his name, and it could quite possibly have been made by any of Hollywood's standardised directors, so utterly was it lacking in Lubitsch's dramatic power.

In the sound era his work is only of note for the occasional touches of his own peculiar wit, which protrudes from the welter of song and dance stuff with which his films are crammed, at the dictation of the commercialists.

Other directors to be lured to Hollywood and seduced from the path of righteous cinema are :—Paul Leni, who in Germany created that great film *Waxworks* and, in the U.S.A., such canned idiocy as *Broadway* and the supreme travesty, *The Man Who Laughs* ; Jacques Feyder, the Belgian, who, in France, made the brilliant *Therese Raquin* (known in England as *Thou Shalt Not*—), made for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer such concentrated piffle as *The Kiss* and *The Son of India*. Michael Curtiz, Alexandra Korda, Lothar Mendes and Berthold Viertel are other Europeans to have their fling in Hollywood.

The reason for the departure of these directors to Hollywood was probably owing to the European cinema being very precariously placed financially following the war. The Americans, quick to realise that these directors were producing films on a higher intellectual plane than they, decided to combine these artists with sensational box-office stories, thus hoping to secure the two publics, the followers of intelligent films and the usual sensation-seekers. The fusion has been a miserable failure, as was bound to be. Some of these directors have now returned to their native lands to endeavour to regain their former status, but unfortunately, the Hollywood brand burns too deep, and their works lack the sincerity of purpose that was apparent before their downfall.

TEMPO IN CONCEPT

BY SIGURD MOIR

Some type of action tempo (based not upon the speed of movement within the scene itself) is to be recognised in several early films although the methods employed are very haphazard and do not in any case represent a serious effort to break away from traditional stage technique.

Pudovkin, and equally resourceful graduates from the Russian State School, proved that the individual frame, and not the scene as shot, is the basis of film construction with all its temporal and spatial concepts. Hence we have come to regard the separate frame precisely as the physicist regards his atom, i.e., as a basic unit combinable in varying multiples with other units to form a host of different molecules. And as surely as the physicist gets his molecules, so do we get strips of film each capable of exciting a different emotional reaction.

It has, for some time past, been recognised that a long string of frames properly connected in progressive sequence tends to create a leisurely atmosphere, whilst short inserts have entirely the reverse effect. But tempo cannot be expressed by single scenes, and it is only in the repetition of film strips that metrical relationship can be introduced. Thus scenes must alternate with other scenes in order to establish rhythm; and it is in the method of this alternation that the many variants of timing are defined.

To explore the simplest possible example, we should start off with two shots—of equivalent footage—representing totally different and unconnected matter. If we now divide each of these shots into four pieces of equal length and splice them alternately without destroying the sense of progression, we may create a simple pattern of expressive tempo. This pattern, however, is far too monotonous or " balanced " to connote rhythm; hence what we must now do is to cut one of the two scenes so that a regular metrical movement is determined, e.g., XX : x, XX : x, XX : x, XX : x.

Naturally, the longer strips are receiving greater emphasis or stress than the shorter, the correlation of these shots, especially in regard to their dramatic significance, being the principal factor in governing accentuation; so that the movement may become XXX : xx, XXX : xx, etc. In actual practice, of course, it is found necessary to deal with more than two scenes, yet few difficulties are encountered provided every phase of action is assigned its relative value in the particular time-scheme adopted.

The matter tends to become difficult only when we apply the forces of acceleration and deceleration. These are necessary in the film construction of climax and anticlimax, yet too often the use of this form of control is marred by clumsy jostling or by the " pause effect " naturally fostered by the larger cuts which constitute the dominant scene. The reason for this common deficiency seems to lie in the fact that cutting is not always carried out with mathematical precision. No jostling could, for example, follow the use of such control when each series of cuts is in common or arithmetical progression, as XXXX:—, XXX : —, XX : —, X : —.

Perhaps less can this apply when the series is in geometrical progression, as XXXX : —, XX : —, X : —; but always the nature of dramatic action must govern the cutting and order of assembly.

Finally, not without regret must it be remarked that the elementary conventions from which the whole science of cutting is evolved are somewhat arbitrary. Thus we have one group of designers blandly dividing the basic film-frame, with another asserting that there is no such thing as montage! The arguments put forward by both factions are more plausible than convincing . . . but such differences of opinion merely add to the confusion and misunderstanding that exist as to what constitutes constructive tempo.

INDIVIDUALISM and THE DOCUMENTARY FILM

BY N. L. SPOTTISWOODE

The term " documentary " has been applied to such diverse types of films as *Berlin*, *Kamaradshaft*, *Rain* and *Battleship Potemkin*, while it is frequently used as a cloak to cover the hollowness of an otherwise empty and uninspired news-production. It is time, therefore, to examine the essential characteristics which justify a film being classified as Documentary. It is, of course, impossible to lay down any hard and fast rule, for there is no definite line which divides the document from the ordinary film. Indeed, it will be seen, later, that any film worthy of serious consideration contains an element of documentation.

The one essential characteristic of a document is that it should contain a record of facts. This, in itself, is insufficient to make the film anything more than a news-reel. Nor will technical dexterity of presentation justify the film as a document ; the Cine-magazines are occasionally technically extremely ingenious and interesting. But both the news-reel and the " interest " film lack one vital element ; an intellectual standpoint on the part of the director. It is not enough merely to show interesting and important things happening, or to collect isolated curiosities and string them together : there must be some comment, some explanation by the director of his own intellectual reactions, his own views and ideas on the things with which he is dealing. The documentary film, both in its true and spurious form, deals almost entirely with matters which have an important effect on the life of the community. The film may be about herring fisheries, or the production of soap, or the distribution of electricity, or even such apparently trivial things as sweeping the streets or cleaning windows. But in every case the important aspect of the process is its social significance. The director must be primarily a sociologist. He must examine minutely the material in hand. He must discover how it is related to the other activities of the community, and must consider which aspects of it he considers good, and which bad. In this lies the difference between the documentary and " interest " film. Perhaps, a better name for the latter would be " lecture " film ; it educates the audience in-so-far as it teaches them facts which they possibly did not know before, and which, incidentally, they will probably forget again in a week. But the facts which are taught are generally of a specialist nature ; how timber is cut and graded ; how matches are put into boxes, or how herrings are caught. Now such knowledge is, in itself, of little value. What is of value, and what in a world of increasing complexity is so hard to obtain, is the realisation of the relation of these processes to each other, and to the everyday life of the individual. With this end in view the director of the documentary film should work.

In case any confusion should arise, it is necessary here to draw the documentary and the propaganda film. For although the two are closely related, there is a basic difference between them which must never be forgotten. The object of propaganda is to make people believe or do something. Incidentally, the word has been much abused, and to many people it has come to imply undesirability. This is due, of course, to the basic aspect of propaganda, that it always puts one point of view forward as opposed to another; it is always, in fact, competitive. The propagandist, however, is not tied to an accurate statement of facts. He will select and distort his facts so that they appear as evidence in favour of the particular point of view he is representing. In extreme cases, this may be permissible, providing the propagandist is working for an organisation or an institution and not for himself. But an individual representing his own opinion only, must avoid, at all costs, any prejudice or bias. Intellectual honesty is the first and most important mental attribute of the documentary film maker, and his films must have as their ideal the disinterested research of the scientist. It must, again be emphasised that this does not mean that it should be a mere record of facts. The scientist first discovers his facts, and then devises his theory to link them up with each other and with other branches of knowledge. If he wishes to emphasise the effect of his theory, he may select certain phenomena which come within its scope, but if he discovers some fact which does not fit into his scheme, he must change his theory. There is all the difference in the world between selecting facts to demonstrate a general law, and distorting the facts to fit a pre-conceived theory. It is, indeed, the difference between document and propaganda.

We have considered so far only what the document is to say, and we now consider how it is to say. This is, of course, chiefly a question of film technique, and so does not strictly come within the scope of this article. However, there are a few general points which may be mentioned. It is frequently stated that a documentary film is one which uses only natural material; that is to say, one which has no actors, studio work, or material over which the director has any control. It will be seen at once that this definition includes the news-reel, and completely avoids the question of intellectual attitude discussed above. There is, in fact, no real reason why the director should confine himself entirely to natural material, although he generally finds it supplies nearly all film needs. The essential point is that his ideas should come from the realities which go to make the life of the community. This material may, if necessary, be artificial.

In constructing the film, there are three main steps to be taken by the director (it goes without saying, of course, that the director and scenarist are one). After the statement of facts, which must be accurate but not specialised, and which should emphasize the spirit rather than the nature of the process under construction, must come the linking of the isolated sections

with the rest of the social whole. This is a movement from particular to general, and must show the interplay of one section of the organic whole with the other. Lastly must come the director's own interpretation of the facts ; it is essential that this should contain implicitly a statement of his ethical standards, or it will become meaningless. It is not implied that the three aspects should be treated entirely separately, for they must obviously overlap. It is, however, quite essential that the film should contain an accurate statement of the facts, or else it will be propaganda and not document.

The would-be-maker of a documentary film must first decide what he has to say, and then say it clearly and accurately, remembering that the criterion of his success is not whether he has made the audience agree with him, but whether he has made them think about the problems which are, to him, so vital.

COMMENT*

S.M. Eisenstein, director of *October*, *Battleship Potemkin;* etc., is now engaged on a comedy. His assistant is H. P. J. Marshall, an Englishman, who was assistant director to Joris Ivens when making *Komsomol.* Mr. Marshall is acting as Russian Correspondent to *Film.*

—

A new English film, which is supposed to have broken away from the usual type of commercial movie, is shortly to be presented in London (probably at the Academy). The film is entitled *In our Time* and has been written and directed by Aveling Ginever.

—

From May 1st the Tatler Cinema, Charing Cross Road, will be showing, for one week, the Film Society presentation *A Bronx Morning.*

—

That certain persons are becoming more and more interested in the aesthetic of the film is shown by the fact that the Civil Service Arts Magazine is, henceforth, to devote a considerable amount of space to the question of film art and constructive cinema.

—

Robert Flaherty who made the excellent documentaries *Nanook* and *Moana* has been, for some little time, on the Aran islands off the West coast of Ireland, making a documentary at present called *Man of Aran.* With the exception of the Aran Islanders and his youthful assistant, he is alone and free to do as he wishes. Gaumont-British are financing him, and are to be congratulated for doing so.

—

With the publication of the second number of *Film*, special pages will be left open to readers for correspondence. Number two will appear in July. Contributors to this and forthcoming issues include : Edward Ashcroft, Andrew Buchanan, Jean Cocteau, Robert Fairthorne, Terence Greenidge, Arabella Hayne, Theodore Komisarjersky, H. P. J. Marshall, N. L. Spottiswoode, Judith Todd, Faith Vanderhorst, Orlton West, and others.

*The Editor will always be pleased to publish, in these pages, notes on avant-garde films being made by individuals or societies, on standard or sub-standard material.

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number one · summer 1933

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film art

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editorial statement

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film art is published entirely independently. It has no outside financial backing whatsoever. We wish our policy to be inspired solely and exclusively by the ideal which led to the founding of this magazine. That policy lies outside the field of commercial enterprise.

film art has not been published merely to high-hat and condemn the commercial film. Our desire is to promote a better understanding of those things which constitute a perfect work of one of the foremost arts—cinema. Also to encourage the making and showing of really intelligent films. Rather than attempt to destroy a sensation-seeking public, we wish to create a new one. This second public should exist as a definite group of persons whose desire is to see artistic films. And who may have a chance of doing so.

In our articles, reviews, etc. we will publish matter that will interest all who consider films as works of art. When criticising films we shall remain unbiased. Art must be international, and we wish to review films of all countries, and, further, to encourage the showing of them.

film art is already circulated in several countries in Europe, besides England, and also in the U.S.A.

As we have said, **film art** is published non-commercially. No profit is made by its publication, and we wish that its price will enable the production cost to be paid for.

We would ask all readers to introduce it to anyone to whom they think its contents and purpose might be of interest.

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towards true cinema

film-form
the question of SOUND

Charles Chaplin has said " The longer I work on the movies the more I marvel at their possibilities, and the more I am convinced that we really know nothing about them yet."* Chaplin's name is not usually connected with film theory, but he has studied it and has realised the potentialities of cinema. He has understood cinema and realised how it has been misunderstood. He refuses to recognise the " talkie " as a part of film, and so made *City Lights* where sound was used as *an adjunct to,* and not as *part of,* the visual image. The film is visual, not visual-tonal. As it is to-day, the film is neither visual nor visual-tonal, because it is not film. It is without form. And there can be no art without form. Pure subject matter, however dynamic, cannot create form. It can hint at it, very broadly, but not create it alone. Several realise this, Eisenstein in particular.

The form of a film is given to it in its montage. When a film is mounted, when scenes of different lengths are cut to suit the subject (here is where subject matter is important), when the tempo is determined, when rhythm is created—then the film takes shape and assumes an art form.

Subject must not be thought insignificant, because to a great extent decides the tempo—static, motional, dynamic—and the tempo directly affects the form. Late Russian films have had a dynamic tempo, their form is dynamic, because the subject matter calls for such presentation. The Russians presented subjects on film directly suited to cinematic representation. They realised that three-quarters of a film is made when it is cut and assembled. Hence the French word, montage, was first used by them in cinema. To-day it pervades every mind interested in vanguard cinema.

In many ways the purely abstract film (e.g. *Etoile de la Mer, Emak Bakia, Montparnasse, Light Rhythms, In der Nacht* etc.) is the purest form of cinema. It relies entirely on form, and the form may absorb the subject matter. In the products of abstraction it generally does.

The complete absence of form in average cinema to-day is well realised by Rudolph Arneim. In his book FILM he says: " The question of choice of material is one of which far too much is made—particularly by the intellectuals. We are not now considering the cultural or political, but only the artistic . . . . There is much of politics and little of art in their stories of the princely state of imaginary millionaires and of exquisites in evening dress whose economic being lies in hidden obscurity. Jacques Feyder's *Nouveaux Messieurs,* however, shows how a great work of art may be made of material that has absolutely no artistic value ".

And while " silent films " were being made at the rate of about a dozen a month, a nearly bankrupt American firm took a bold chance and intro-

* FILM by Rudolph Arneim (Faber & Faber 15/-) Reviewed elsewhere.

duced sound (!) into motion pictures. The result? Success. (I mean commercial success and so did they). And so nowadays the " talkie " is accepted as cinema. You only have to go to any normal cinema (those like the Academy being ab-normal) to see examples of so much wasted celluloid and sound (i.e. generally talk and song), and so it may be more profitable to give examples of the few *films* that have been made. But then there is but little good in mentioning so many *Potemkins, Berlins, Chien Andolous, General Lines, Finis Terraes,* unless the fundamentals underlying their perfection are understood. In other words—what is film?

Film is visual poetry. Very expensive poetry. And that is so unfortunate, because it means that money gets mixed up with art, and they form an unhappy mixture. But material things cannot destroy fundamentals. Actually, of course, they do, theoretically they cannot. Before saying anything on sound I would quote another of Arneim's sentences from FILM: " It is frequently said that the sound film, being a new art form, needs a method of production totally different from that used for silent films . . . . It is true that the methods of production must be different, but it is false to say that sound film and silent film are two distinct arts with different canons. *There is but one art of film and its laws hold equally for all branches*". (Italics mine).

Bravo, Mr. Arneim, I wish everyone would realise it. And again Arneim says: " People who did not understand anything of film art used always to cite silence as one of its most serious drawbacks. It is these same people who regard the introduction of sound as one of the improvements or completion of silent film. This opinion is just as senseless as if the discovery of plastic oil painting—Arthur Segal, a member of the November Group, made an unsuccessful attempt of this nature in his relief pictures—were hailed as an advance on the hitherto known principles of painting.

It was from its very silence that film received the impetus as well as the power to achieve excellent artistic effects ".

John Grierson, a short time ago, said: " The finest sound film I have seen is the version of Eisenstein's *Potemkin* with the music of E. Meisel ". Needless to say, Potemkin was a ' silent ' film. The music, being very well-chosen, added to the effect.

This shows that, used purely as a *sound adjunct,* sound can aid a film to achieve its effect. But it should not be indispensable to it. Mr. Paul Rotha, in his new film *Contact* which illustrates the journey which will link the Empire into unity by means of the new air routes, will not use a running commentary in his film. The sound will be specially composed music with the noise of aeroplane engines added when desired. The disturbing, and so often unnecessary, commentary will be replaced by sub-titles which Mr. Rotha says* " will not be static and lifeless like the titles of silent days. They will form part of the movement of the film. They will grow and diminish and assume dramatic meaning for the spectator ". Here, at last, is somebody putting sound into its proper place.

* Sight and Sound, No. 5. Spring 1933.

The talking film we see to-day is merely bad theatre on celluloid. Without its talk it would be incomprehensible. And a film, being a visual thing, should be able to exist by itself, although synchronisation (generally in the form of music) will improve and heighten the value of the visual image. Mickey Mouse is an example of good sound film. Shown without any sound it would be dull and uninteresting, but it would be intelligible. The sound (which, it will be remembered, is not talk) heightens the significance of every scene. "The pure talkie" says Arneim "differs from the theatre only technically" and "actually talkie does not differ from the theatre in any way, except in the fact that the theatre provides colour and plasticity—that it gives the real happening instead of a plane uncoloured reproduction . . . . the use of coloured film, or stereoscopic film, of various sized screens, which constitute a real danger to the development of film art, are of advantage in talkies. *The truth is that talkie is no part of film art.*"

The whole fault of the present day talking film which, as I have said, is totally different from a sound film, lies in the fact that what should be expressed in terms of motion pictures is done in terms of the spoken word. A fact directly against all aesthetic principles governing film art.

B. BRAUN.

One number of this magazine has been previously issued, in a smaller form, under the title *Film*. We must apologise to the John Stuart Film Club for using this name which is used by them for the magazine they issue as the organ of the John Stuart Film Club.

the living man--film material

Theodore Komisarjevsky

First—moving photography of natural life and people: then—moving photography of cheap stage-like falsifications of nature and people: and, at last, the falsifications not only photographed in movement but gramophonically recorded as well. This is the history of the development of the so-called popular and commercial cinema.

Vaseline tears, prima-donna's cream-cheese faces, wax work vamps are the distinctive signs of the vulgarity and silliness of this art.

But why should it be anything but silly? And those who turn or sell films are, I beg your pardon, mere profiteers of human imbecility.

But I wonder whether they do not over-rate the emptiness of human heads. Perhaps the masses go to the kino chiefly because their houses are dull and dingy, their suits and dresses are poor and they have not enough to eat, while the Kino palaces are so grand and the ladies and gentlemen on the screen so smart and well-groomed and have plenty to gobble. Besides it is so dark while the picture is on and the seats are cheap and springy or airtight (the last word in comfort) and everything invites for a cosy doze or a little love-making. Where should the English boys and girls go with their friends but to the Kino? There is a policeman in the street. To go to an hotel is frightening and not *respectable*. And not everyone has money for week-ends out of town.

The popular cinema does not actually cater for imbeciles. It breeds them. Being lured into Kino-palaces and forced to look at the insipidities shown on the screen, people cannot help getting shallow-brained, incapable of seeing life as it is, cannot help developing the complexes of sexual maniacs and gangsters. If cinema goers do not kill each other in the street and if our towns are not yet transformed into concentration camps for several psychopaths, it is because the masses are not composed of such imbeciles as the film makers think.

Well—I am afraid we can't do anything against the popular and commercial cinema. The millionaires and some other powers of the capitalist world are with it and in it and we are neither capitalists nor possess the necessary power to counter-act its influence. Let us leave it to destroy itself. No doubt one fine day it will come to nothing.

Let us see what is the cinema as an art. Life is formless chaos and a work of art is harmonious composition. A man of art is a man with ideals and gifts for such compositions. As Goethe said " It is not an easy matter to evolve the lofty out of commonplace or beauty out of formlessness." The sonorific cinema belongs to dynamically-plastic as well as to musical art. The spoken lines being rhythmical are musical.

The artist who chooses the camera as medium for his work is interested in objects, people and their elements moving co-rhythmically to the sonorific effects of words, speeches, fragments of words and speeches or any other sounds. The movements of these items devised and directed in such a way as to express the intuitive (irrational) feelings and the ideas of the artist form his kino-compositions. When he has to deal with real human beings, he fits them into his compositions. He uses the living man not as a naturalistic item and not as a stage actor but (to use the German expression) as a *Kunstfigur*. Shooting him at imaginative angles with imaginative lights and shades, decomposing him into elements and composing new plastic and dynamic values of these elements, he makes of the living man not only a figure of art but also uses him as plastic material.

In the commercial films, the man is nothing but an actor who serves as a model for flat photography. As we all know, a genuine good actor, because of many circumstances which it is too long to enumerate here, cannot act for the film. Besides it is a most futile thing to photograph tinned acting. In the artistic film a man is an item of the general composition and he has the same value for the will of the artist as any other object used such as the light, the sound, the tempo and the rhythm of the movement.

surrealism

what it is
its influence on cinema

Edward Ashcroft

The first manifesto of the Surrealist group war published in Paris in 1924 and contained the following definition of Surrealism " . . . . Surrealism rests on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of association neglected heretofore: in the all-powerfulness of the dream, in the disinterested play of thought. It aims definitely at shattering all other forms of psychic mechanism, taking their place in solving the principal life-problems "

In a recent work, *Les Vases Communicants,* André Breton has greatly elaborated his concert of surreality. The dream is considered not in so far as it throws light on the conscious personality or on the life-problems of the dreamer: apart from those fragments of the dream which are clearly due to the existence of conscious or unconscious desires seeking realisation, or which are part of the sleep preserving mechanism, the dream is considered as the supreme manifestation of reality. The dream is outside time and the poet of the future, or rather the apt awake-dreamer, will be able to receive and transmit appeals which come to him from the depths of time.

" When " Breton has written " the dream shall have been submitted to a methodic examination in the course of which by means yet to be determined we shall arrive at an understanding of the dream in its integrity (and this presupposes a memory-discipline of generations) when the dream-curve shall have developed with a regularity and amplitude yet unequalled, the mysteries of existence will give place to one great mystery. I believe that in the future these two apparently contradictory states—the dream and the reality states—will resolve into a reality absolute, a surreality.

With regard more precisely to aesthetic activity, Max Ernst has written the following in a recent number of *Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution* " No conscious intellectual direction (either of reason, taste or will) being permissable in an absolutely surrealist work of art, the active part of the person till now described as the author of the work is greatly reduced. It is as a spectator, either passionate or indifferent, that the author assists at the creation of the work, observing the phases of its development. Just as the poet writes under the dictation of that which *thinks itself* inside him, so the rôle of the painter is to surround and to project that which *sees itself* inside him."

Surrealist literature is an extreme example of the tendency to use as creative material the introspective life of the individual. The only generally valid method of aesthetic classification of literature is classification according to subject. In European literature from the time of Chaucer and Villon there has been a steady tendency towards the use of introspective material. The greater part of surrealist literature illustrates the extreme of this tendency: that which has been abandoned is far more than the great emotional commonplaces.

The poetry of Paul Eluard, Tzara and Desnos, the novels of Crevel, Soupault and Aragon (when these two last were members of the surrealist group) are, in the sense of discarding conscious material, as evidently surrealist as they are vivid aesthetic creations. But for all that much of the best surrealistic literature has an essential similarity to other contemporary work produced by writers is no way influenced by surrealist theory, such as Massimo Bontempeli, Ribemount Dessaignes, and the late Italo Svevo. Furthermore, it must be remembered that most of the surrealist writers have been profoundly influenced by Jarry by Max Jacob and by Guillaume Appolinaire: the latter indeed first used the word le sur-réel to describe the invocatory and prophetic atmosphere of his play Les Mamelles de Tirésias.

But if, then, surrealist literature can be classified and grouped with other contemporary literature, surrealism exists as a theory and as an approach to life and to art, independently of the work of its members.

Surrealism is thus more than the sum of the products of its members in that it is an expression in various materials and lives of a form of reality perceived or created. It is a deliberate expression (vide Max Ernst *Comment on Force l'Inspiration*) and the type of reality is the irrational, the unlinked, if one may so express it, the meaningless, that on the farthest confines of the mind where *presence* of mind is almost unnecessary but as a means of description. Nothing is more real than the appearance as appearance (Hegel). The work of the now compact group who contribute to *Le Surrealisme au Service de la Révolution* has therefore an interest apart from the aesthetic value of the work produced.

II.

Jolas in the last number of *Transition* states that " . . . the failure (sic) or surrealism lay in the inability of André Breton and his friends to draw the full consequences from their great experiments. They were unable to see that the expression of the unconscious demanded new means. It was not enough to whirl the unaccustomed realities of the dream-state together. It was essential to express the nocturnal world with a nocturnal language." The only valuable part of the last number of *Transition*—this " international workshop for orphic creation " was, apart from a bibliography of work previously published, the fragment from Joyce's *work in progress*. Here is something in which the structure and elements of language have been disassociated. It is no doubt interesting, humorous, poetic and it may have a deeper significance than these adjectives convey—this *work in progress*. But it has nothing to do with surrealism. In disassociating the English language, Joyce has created a medium of which he has become servant. But servitude to the medium employed is the last thing required for the deliberate abdication of the mind to obsessional phenomena. It can be said that language is a good medium for surrealism in proportion to the extent that its words are devoid of emotional significance.

It is not surprising therefore that the work which is most profoundly surrealist and yet which has aesthetic significance should be the plastic poetry of Max Ernst, Miro, Arp and Paul Klee. In this work, the aim has been to express obsessional experiences by means of hard lines, colour, *collages* of objects of various kinds, the creation of associations between objects which have no apparent association with each other nor with the medium in which they are placed. (Example—the bringing together upon an operating table of a sewing machine and an umbrella). This has also been the aim of the photography of Man Ray—the creation of new relations between objects.

Various so-called surrealist films have been produced but here quite definitely the image successions have been dictated mainly by aesthetic sensitivity to photography. Cocteau's film *Le Sang d'un Poète* is miscalled surrealistic. It is no more, nor is it intended to be, a document of the unconscious than is an El Greco painting.

The cinema is the only modern art medium which has an audience not sectionally divided by intelligence levels. The choice of subject of the film maker is wide and he is not under the necessity of searching for newness of subject in the introspective life of the individual. It is likely that the material of the European cinema will be social and constructivist. The stress of economic conditions, the downfall of the capitalist system, will renew the will of the European people and hence provide an audience for such films. It is unlikely therefore that the main lines of cinema development will lie in producing work utilising introspective material.

But that the cinema will have as one of its themes the deliberate investigation of consciousness not on the lines of an experimental method but through the spontaneous science of artistic creation is certain. There is always a profund resemblance between all contemporary artistic activity whatever its medium. In the recording of individual or collective hallucinations or obsessions the moving camera has an advantage over all other instruments. Subjective life is primarily visual and a better subject for the impersonal lives than for description in words or plastic materials.

present avant-garde productions

John C. Moore

FRANCE:

It is said that the advent of the sound film would mean the death of the abstract and expressionist film. It is therefore interesting to see the results achieved by a group of young experimentalists, under the guidance of the eminent director Maurice Sollin, with a capital of a bare 20,000 francs.

As is common in the circles of the AVANT GARDE, " THE GROUP " —as these experimentalists call themselves—worked for the love of art, and their payment will depend mainly on the success of their first ambitious effort: THE STREET. This film deals, in almost primitive simplicity, with three typical characters of the street: The prostitute, the beggar woman and the flower girl. All three parts are taken by the young actress Tamara Loundina.

The dialogue of this film is of secondary interest, its main object being to record faithfully the sordid aspect of a Paris street, and the particularities of its inhabitants.

Members of the French AVANT GARDE that have become distinguished are numerous. Who has never heard of Epstein, Cavalcanti, Léger or Jean Rénoir, son of the famous painter Auguste Rénoir? Their fame has spread far beyond the borders of their native land, and film students the world over eagerly await presentation of their latest achievements.

It therefore surprises me that the two Rénoir films LA CHIENNE and BAUDU SAUVÉ DES EAUX have never been shown publicly in London. The first has even been referred to as one of the outstanding French productions, whilst the acting of Michel Simon in both films is beyond reproach.

Rénoir is chiefly known over here through his NANA, a film of little merit, with Werner Krauss, and LA PETITE MARCHANDISE D'ALLUMETTES, based on Hans Anderson's story, in which Rénoir's wife, Catherine Hessling, appeared with great success.

A Jean Rénoir film would certainly be welcome in London.

HOLLAND:

Holland too has its AVANT GARDE; or to be more exact, it has only an AVANT GARDE, which is small, though select.

Most English filmgoers are acquainted with the works of Joris Ivens, and two of his latest films KOMSOMOL MAGNITOGORSK, which he made in collaboration with FILM ART'S Soviet correspondent H. P. J. Marshall, and his ZUIDERZEE fragments, appear on the programme of the FILM SOCIETY.

Of great interest is Hans Eisler's musical score of KOMSOMOL which, as it does not synchronise with the visual image, deviates considerably from the illustrations of other composers, such as Edmund Meisel's accompaniment to SYMPHONY EINER WELTSTADT. It is rather a case of one common subject treated by two entirely different artists in their own manner and medium, than of a corresponding visual and audible rhythm. This illustration is said to be much more advanced than that to KUHLE WAMPE, also composed by Eisler.

Of interest also is the film SJABBOS, depicting the Sabbath celebrations in the Amsterdam Ghetto, a sound production of the well-known Dutch artist Jo Spier and the director G. J. Teunissen, who has recently been working at Elstree. It is a short film, but poignant and beautiful in its representation of a typical Amsterdam quarter. The camera work and sound illustration throughout are excellent; especially some shots taken in a synagogue are of profound sincerity. It is a great advance on PIEREMENT, the previous effort of these two artists.

At the request of the NOORD & ZUID HOLLANDSCHE REDDING MIJ. Mr. M. H. K. Franken, who assisted Joris Ivens in making RAIN, produced a film dealing with the salvage work of the Dutch coast. It is a film of great pictorial beauty, although its montage is not its strong point. But it stands out through its simplicity.

Amongst other foreign reports in the next number, we hope to publish a special account of the film condition in Germany. G. W. Pabst has already been forced to leave that country, and all his films have been banned . . . . Ed.

Pudovkin's simple case

A SIMPLE CASE
directed by V. I. Pudovkin

There was a time when the showing of a Russian film in London was the excuse for a campaign in the yellow press against Bolshevik propaganda. Those were the days when only the initiated few were aware that Russia was building up a vigorous school of cinema which was to be reckoned outside all political and economic considerations, and which was capable of producing a great and serious art. The popular press ignored this aspect, and indeed it can hardly be blamed. For the Russians live close to the land and the physical conditions of life are all important to them. Their politics, especially in these last years, have been no abstract, head-in-air, parliamentary process, but a vital influence in their lives. Their art forms have always grown out of their mode of life. So in their most successful films the technique is so much a part of the theme that it is easy for one whose artistic sensibilities are not highly developed to see in them only a glorification of the Bolshevik ideal. It is an art so opposed to any purely formal dilletantism that it conceals itself. But it has form nevertheless. It is what an art should be, an expression through form of the matter to be expressed.

Though their main concern has been with the content, the Russians have studied the form, the meaning, the material of cinema probably as no one else. This intense study has led Pudovkin momentarily to abandon his vital concern with life, wherein his genius must inevitably lie, and to lapse into exploitation of technique for its own sake. *The Story of a Simple Case* (it is unfortunate that its title on the screen should have been given as *A Simple Story*) is a strange blending of realism, symbolism and rhetorical heroics. It was planned as a sound film. Because of technical difficulties, however, it was never synchronised. But when this unavoidable weakness has been set aside, there still remains a lack of cohesion between the various parts.

The story is partly to blame, not so much in itself as in its unsuitability to the genius of Pudovkin. He has tried to build a slight and usual theme into a national epic, and the strain has been too great. He has been forced to supplement the story with symbolic imagery—plants dying and growing again, rain storms and quieter showers, a man diving and swimming under water,—all very lovely in themselves and potentially good cinema, but requiring a setting less vital than this. It recalls the elliptic imagery of T. S. Eliot, whose poetry is scarcely compatible with the spirit of modern Russia.

The cinema one expects from Russia is nearer to genuine, unsentimentalised peasant life than this. There is nothing in English art to which it is comparable; for it is not rural and contemplative like the art of Wordsworth or of Constable. It is not even the art of Lawrence, whose characters, though they must work and struggle to live, have always a desire to avoid this struggle. What one expects rather, is a cinema whose quality is an essential

part of this new medium but which derives directly from the writings of Pushkin, Dostoievsky and Tolstoy. Already they have in part created such an art, and the very acknowledgement of failure is a hopeful sign that Pudovkin will return to it.

IRENE NICHOLSON.

film review

DON QUIXOTE

directed by G. W. Pabst
photographed by Nicolas Farkas

It is always dangerous to give a rendering, in some other medium, of an acknowledged masterpiece. Yet *Don Quixote* should have been an excellent subject for a film. Fantasy, for which the cinema offers such endless possibilities, has so far been almost ignored. We have been given the " whimsy-whimsy " in *A Kiss for Cinderella* and a whole collection of films equally sentimental. We have also had *Love me tonight,* which is a very sophisticated fantasy, a sort of " Midsummer Night's Dream " seen through the eyes of Hollywood. But so far as I know there has been nothing which, by means of the abundant tricks of the trade, achieves a complete and intentional unreality.

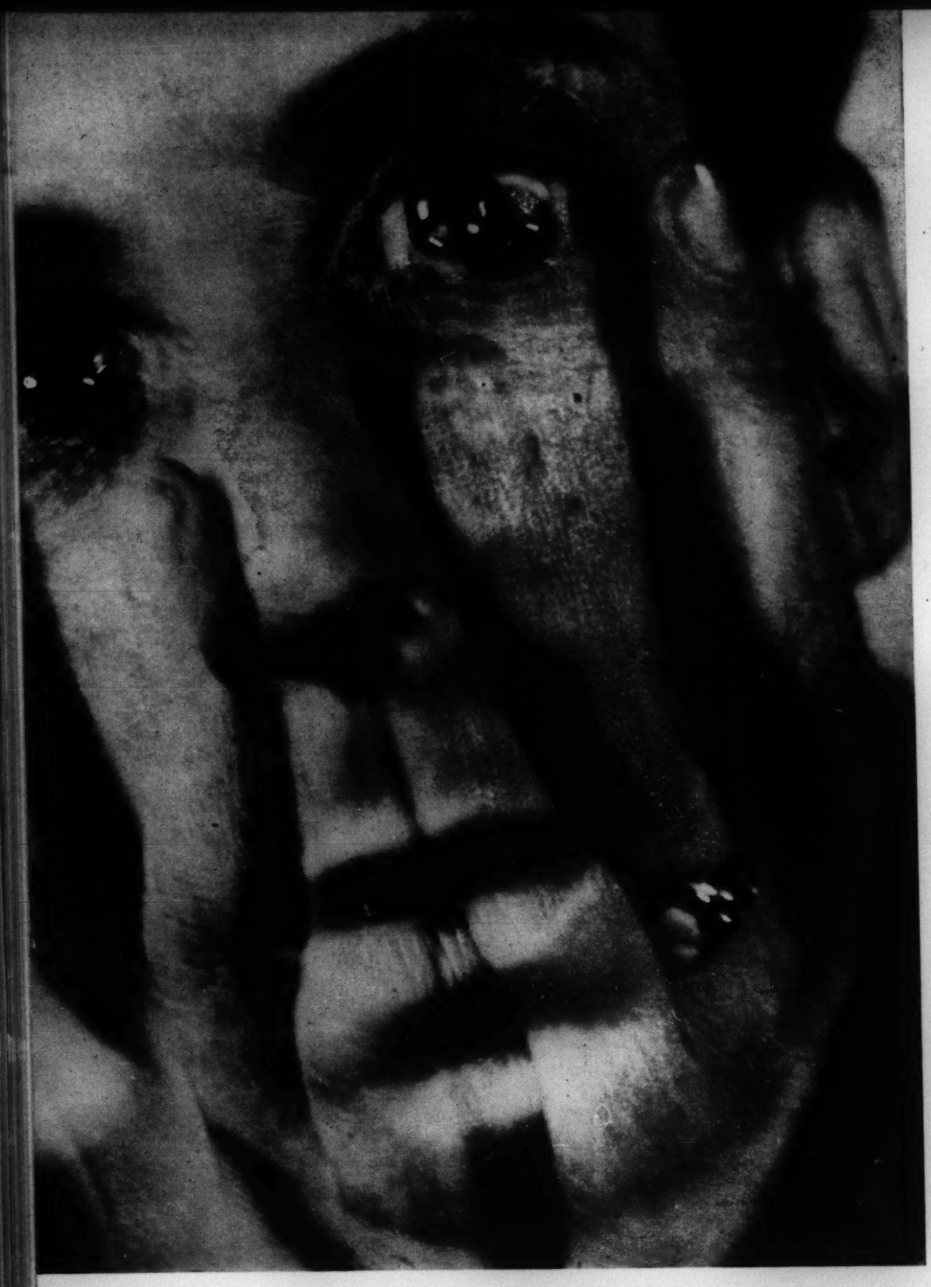
This international medley of a film is fantastic only in its incongruities. Here is a madman with a lovely but superfluous voice, and a comedian whose humour is entirely of the English music hall. At times we seem to have been transported to Covent Garden, until we realise that this is just another modernised parody in the style of the A.P.H., Offenbach *Helen.* But a parody of a parody can hardly be a success, and there remains a lingering suspicion that this effect is at least partially unintentional. Through this strange aglommeration of talent Pabst's direction wanders uncertainly. The scenes in Don Quixote's room, strewn with books and rusty armour and overspread with cobwebs, is indeed the stuff that dreams are made on, and the tournament scene, except where an American accent strays into its midst, has the same unreal quality. On the other hand there are sheep that are very like sheep, beggars whose rags and tatters are worthy of Russian realism, and exteriors of a farm house that might be the setting for a film of Dutch or Flemish peasant life.

Chaliapin emerges as an actor triumphant, though his songs are dull, impeding the action. Robey is uncomfortable in these new surroundings, and by no means at his best. As for Cervantes, he is scarcely noticeable. Not for one moment do we feel that this is a world so mad that even its creator believes in the reality of its madness. The unforgiveable sin would have been to make Quixote a laughable figure, and Chaliapin's acting spares him from that, but we are never near seeing the world through his eyes.

It would seem best, even when the material is so tempting, to leave the great things of the world alone. Yet the hope lingers that one day " Don Quixote " will be filmed again, and filmed as a real interpretation of the book.

I. N.

Telephone Service
produced by John Grierson
directed by S. Legg



Accident !

a film study by Casson

Le Rosier de Madame Husson

by Bernard Deschamps

Le Rosier de Madame Husson

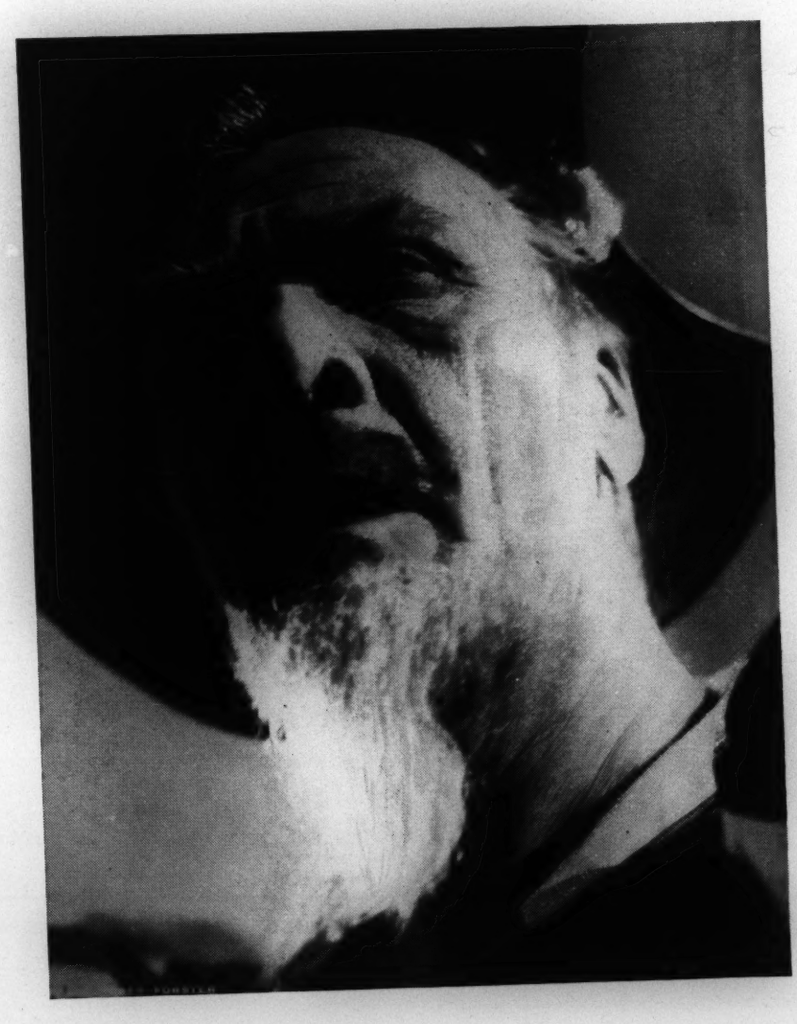
directed by
International Productions Ltd.

light and shade; from B. Braun's abstract *exhileration*

photo by Casson

Man of Aran
the film Robert Flaherty is finishing on the Aran Islands

Elizabeth Bergner in Paul Czinner's
Der Traumende Mund



Chaliapin in G. W. Pabst's
Don Quixote

Deserter

Pudovkin's first sound film

(more photographs from this in the next number)

LE ROSIER DE MADAME HUSSON

(Virtuous Isadore)

Film has been the first art to borrow extensively from another medium. Its subject matter has usually been previously shaped in one form or another—the novel, the short story, the opera, the drama. The resulting concoction is in most cases the literary and " stagey " compromise with which we are only too familiar.

Le Rosier de Madame Husson is a successful exception; it is not merely a story told in pictures; the pictures are themselves the story. There are parts where there is too much chatter, and in the opening scene, where the merits and demerits of various wives and daughters are discussed, the humour is purely verbal. But in the similar scene that follows the interest is transferred from the spoken word to the visual image. There is little actually said against any of the girls on a long list of possible May Queens; only a look, a sniff, and the name is irrevocably crossed off.

Then there is the scene of the banquet, where everything from the grotesque eagerness of Isidore's table manners to the oglings of numerous fat women is expressed entirely without the help of words. Facial expression plays a large part throughout the film. In the scenes where the prostitute whispers to Isidore and where Isidore peers through the keyhole there is no need to be told what he has heard and seen. This part of the film has been treated with exceptional brilliance. The lovers, the fortune teller, the tightly clasped dancers, leave a vivid and terrible impression, and the very shortness of their journeying across our field of vision lends them an ephemeral quality as of moths who will die with the daylight. It is not often that the frame in which the image is set is used to such effect, cutting off and making absolutely non-existent all but one moment in the lives of the actors. Those who do not believe that the cinema is capable of expressing any depth of thought should consider this scene, and also the juxtaposition of the images which follow: Isidore being thrown out into the street; a broom sweeping out the rubbish; a hand salvaging from the refuse the cork of a champagne bottle; the same hand tying together a bunch of keys with the string that held the roses of Isidore's crown; and finally the wiping of a boot with the treasured diploma of virtue. No degradation could be more complete than this, and unyieldy words could not put the matter one half so concisely. The rest of the film, to the somewhat obvious ending where Madame Husson is disillusioned with a kiss, is mere anti-climax, a neat disposing of the strings after the knot has been tied.

There must have been an exhaustive hunting for types before this film was begun. Artistic and box-office techniques differ widely in their every approach to cinema, but especially in this—that while the artistic producer will search the world to find the type he knows he wants, the box-office producer creates, with the help of dress-designers and beauty parlours, the type he thinks the public want. If *Le Rosier de Madame Husson* has been made as most American films are made, the dancers in the Paris night haunt would have been nauseating in their refinement and stylish clothing; and what is more,

the Gargantuan coarseness of the large woman in corsets would have been replaced by the subtly disgusting and far less effective lingerie of Miss Jeanette Macdonald.

The success of this film leads one to wonder whether the short story is not the best type of literature to transpose (if one must take material second-hand) into the medium of cinema. The drama is altogether too static an art, shut in as it is by three walls and an audience. The novel is diffuse and in its wanderings tends to grow abstract. But the short story, in the space that is allowed it, must tell its tale and depict its characters quickly and therefore by means of concrete visual images. The good short story does not convey ideas except, as the cinema, through action and the appearance of things. Nevertheless it will always remain dangerous for any but the best directors to make their films from literary material, even the most visually conceived. It is a pity that the vast majority of the film world obstinately refuses to realise this simple truth, and a film like this, because of its very excellence, is not likely to drive it home more deeply.

IRENE NICHOLSON.

EXTASE

extasy
directed by G. Machaty
photographed by Stalich
music by Dr. Becce

This film is now in Paris, and also at LE STUDIO du Palais des Beaux-Arts, Bruxelles. We advise French and Belgian readers to see it. It is not a good film, if, by good, we mean a satisfying complete film. But it has moments—about three—when we have the pleasure of seeing first rate examples of cinema.

The whole is a curious mixture of sloppy and almost humorous sentimentalities, and, as I have said, patches of beautiful cinema. There is one sequence, near the end,—a sort of ' life goes on ', ' work must continue ' essay—presented in terms of men digging (with their rhythmic movements cut into strips of celluloid, forming filmic rhythm—a thrill in itself), gravel being sieved, earth being turned, water being pumped, machines moving, trees falling, and so on. A perfect sequence, this, with the cutting getting quicker and quicker, until men, machines and light, together with the camera panning, receding, swinging, all form a symphonic cross-cutting of movement conceiving a dynamic accelerating tempo, shouting its message of ' life goes on ' in a manner showing the power of the cinema as fine art.

To see this marvellous sequence which, I am told, one cinema cut out as they thought it would bore the audience, there is much slop and sentiment which really is boring. Throughout the photography is very lovely.

With *Pred Maturitou,* and A. Hackenschmied's rhythmic and architectonic sound-film study *Prague Castle,* and other Czech shorts, the Czechoslovakian cinema is coming into being. Their first films, though containing many faults, are sufficient reminder that this country is out to make films which will be commercial successes, and, at the same time, worthy of being called artistic.

B. B.

a Japanese test tube

Robert Fairthorne

For some time the artist, in common with other upholders of direct revelation, has been hard set to keep the scientist from the door. This danger is over estimated by those who confuse scientific method with machinery and the gas works. The wild scientist is, if anything, too easily tamed and the dessicating blast of mathematics may prove a powerful antiseptic. Nevertheless, the Institute of Physical and Chemical Research, Tokio, may seem an unpromising source of anything but the physical processes of film production.

In the article reviewed here, Terada lays bare the fundamentals on which the illusion of the film is based. It is no criticism to say that these are obvious to anyone who sits down and thinks for five minutes. We do not, as a rule, sit down and think about fundamentals for five minutes.

Representational and perspective painting is only a small, recent, and geographically limited form of pictorial art. So it is in theory surprising, but in practice essential, that a Japanese writing for a European reader should say,

> " The two-dimensional world of light and shadow projected on the screen of a cinema theatre is something quite unique and essentially different from our own material world of reality, the points of resemblance between the worlds being extremely scanty, if any."

Few animals appear to find significance in pictures, neither do savages or very young children. It is a common experience, when very tired, to be momentarily forced to an effort of will in order to accept an unfamiliar picture as anything but a pattern. Which, in fact it is. The pattern is linked to reality by habit, convention, and imagination.

> " All the wonders of cinematography," says Terada, " steal in unwatched through this forgotten chasm. Possibilities of future cinema technique could therefore be anticipated . . . . by thorough analysis of the essential points of difference between these two worlds."

We can only interpret events in terms of our own experience. For example, the events on the cinema screen have neither mass nor weight, being mere patches of light and shade. Yet unconsciously we allot weights to the screen images, and thus make possible the illusion of a Hercules lifting enormous weights, so long as the image is sufficiently imperfect to hide the fact that the weights were originally lath and canvas.

As for weight, so for size. *Before* and *behind* have no meaning on a flat screen. Two objects are no longer unable to occupy the same space, nor is one object compelled to remain in one place at the same time. Reading into this untrammelled world our every day experienec of solidity and perspective, we create for ourselves the illusions of ghosts, of Paul Parrot singing a quartet with himself, and of the three foot monsters of *The Lost World* and *King Kong* towering above human beings. Not alone do the translated physical properties create the illusion of reality. The three-horned rhinoceros with its calf scuttling behind, in *The Lost World,* was more real than some of the technically perfect illusions of *King Kong.*

The breadth of illusion does not arise from the perfection, but from the imperfection of the cinematographic process. The screen can only represent the optical qualities of the physical world, and these but narrowly. On that flimsy bubble the imagination builds a world. In a certain sense, the director

cannot add to the experience of his audience, he can only rearrange it.

To stop reviewing for a moment, it is as well to point out that here again is shown the important fact that the significance of news reels and documentary films lies in the attitude of mind of the audience, not in the material itself. The present tendency towards introducing obviously acted 'comedy' shots into news films; the soiling of travel pictures with shots which, if authentic, must have been taken by an angelic cameraman with unlimited supplies of film; the increasing number of deliberately propagandist films, will all destroy this attitude of mind. In a few years documentary films will be psychologically impossible.

So far only the more pictorial qualities of the screen image have been discussed. Terada now investigates the effect of manipulating the time element. Contraction or stretching of duration makes a rifle bullet creep from the muzzle to the target, or a flower grow and blossom in a few minutes. A plant dying in shallow soil becomes a horrible writhing creature, beating the ground with its roots in a vain attempt to get nourishment. Not only can the time scale be altered, but events can be arranged in time. This is the solid basis of all theories of film construction.

The effects of stretching or rearranging the time scale are banal in comparison with those caused by reversing the order of time, so that *before* becomes *after*. By running film backward we not only alter the sequence of events, but also their character. Along a charred stick runs a flame, leaving an unburnt match behind. A hand stirring a mixture of rice and wheat, leaving the two kinds of grain neatly separated. Circular ripples contract into their centre, leaving the water calm. In the physical world, we cannot tell which way a pencil will fall if it is balanced on its point, although we know that it will fall. In the world of the film run backwards, all pencils will inevitably seek an upright position, provided that they are *fallen pencils* at all. Is it possible that recent films of the *coming-out-of-a-sewer-smelling-of-violets* type owe their origin to moral films run backwards?

The only events unchanged by a reversed time scale are those typified by the swinging of a frictionless pendulum. Perhaps film theorists who analyse the cinema in terms of motion will take the hint.

Finally, the intermittent nature of the (present day) film image permits the action of forces impossible in the real world. Sudden appearances and disappearances, the movements of Mickey Mouse and King Kong, are caused by agencies which have slipped through the holes in the network of cinema time.

Let Terada sum up,

> "The marvels of cinematography thus owe their possibility to our unconscious oblivion of the difference between the world of screen and the world of ours. Though the fact is as commonplace as possible, the possibilities of cinema which are based on this plain fact seem to be still not fully realized and utilized by present day cinema producers. The future of cinematography seems thus to be anticipated by a more exhaustive analysis of the problems, of which a mere passing hint is given in the present sketch."

It is significant that although, or because, he deals with fundamentals, he does not find it necessary to mention the photographic process.

Eisenstein aims at simplicity

Marie Seton

At last the mutilated version of the film Eisenstein made in Mexico has been shown in America: naturally amid a storm of controversy. One critic writes of it as " the bastard child of Hollywood and Moscow, but like many illigitimate children it is more beautiful than either parent." Another calls it a Socialist Lesson Part I. At any rate the cinema where it was shown had to be surrounded by the police;—for fear of insurrection.

Only one episode out of the great mass of material shot by Eisenstein has been used. As he was due to return to Moscow his mass of negative was handed over to an intruder to be " cut ", so that it is now more the work of the cameraman Tisse than of Eisenstein, whose conception and meaning only come to life in his editing room.

No greater tragedy could have befallen Eisenstein than to have had the work of fourteen months put upon the commercial market in an entirely foreign form, dominated not by ideas but by beautiful camera angles. What would have been a profound philosophical and social document of the Mexican people has been reduced into a beautiful study in anthropology.

Such an episode is indicative of Hollywood's prostitution of the artist to commercialism. For months Eisenstein made despairing efforts to extract his work from the clutches of its backers, with no avail; but now he has adjusted the whole unfortunate affair and is about to start work on the scenario of a new picture, an episodic history of Moscow.

" I am starting to learn all over again " he said to me in Moscow recently " the past is finished and there is so much to be done in the future for we are at the beginning of a new era in film development. In the Moscow film I shall endeavour to combine the methods of *Potemkin* and *October* (Ten Days That Shook the World)."

Eisenstein will find the material for this film, on the one hand, from the time of Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great and Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, with all the magnificent pagentry of the Tzarist regime, and on the other hand, he will make a genealogical study of a Moscow proletarian family through the ages up to the present time.

An immence amount of research will be necessary for the making of such a picture and all Moscow's archelogical resources will be put at Eisenstein's disposal: he is the ideal director to handle such a subject for he is essentially the man of learning, depending to a greater extent upon the intellectual than the emotional conception of subject and form. It is for this very reason that though Eisenstein has not always created a masterpiece he has never made a second rate picture.

As this will be Eisenstein's first sound picture his experiments will be awaited with the feeling that they may revolutionize sound technique. But those people who expect him to give them staggering new effects will be surprised to find that he intends to discard all the tricks and experiments with sound cutting that have occupied the attention of cinema theorists.

"These tricks" he says "are childish we must get simplicity and I'm determined to use only the simplest methods of sound."

Such a move on the part of a practical theorist is likely to have far reaching effects and to lead the way towards a severely classical style of sound film.

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mutilation of a masterpiece

S. M. Eisenstein's Que Viva Mexico

B. B.

The whole American avant-garde has risen against the Hollywod version of Eisenstein's film he made in Mexico, which has been released under the title *Thunder over Mexico*. The mass of film shot by Eisenstein has been cut BY HOLLYWOOD CUTTERS, and now remains *Thunder over Mexico*, a 7,000ft. Hollywood edition.

It is a disgusting thing that Eisenstein, who first realised the significance of montage, should have had his film *edited* by people who are still wondering what the film is all about.

Flaming manifestos have been distributed denouncing *Thunder over Mexico* as a cheap debasement of *Que Viva Mexico*. Appeals have been made to the backers, represented by Upton Sinclair, but in vain.

The American avant-garde and *Experimental Cinema* think that the pressure of world wide appeal to the conscience of the backers may induce them to realise the gravity of the situation and give the film to its maker.

They appeal to all lovers of film art, to all students of Eisenstein, to all friends of Mexico, to support the campaign to save the negative of *Que Viva Mexico*.

That this said-to-be masterpiece should have been mutilated by a bunch of commercialists whose knowledge of montage probably leaves much to be desired, is a proof of the commercial ethics that have always dominated Hollywood. All who are willing are asked to send letters of appeal and protest to Upton Sinclair, 614 North Arden Drive, Beverly Hills, California.

B. B.

An English version of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart* is now in production, being directed by Brian Desmond Hurst. The film is being made independently in London, and will be mounted, shortly, by the directors. It is hoped that full particulars, with photographs, will appear in the next number of *film art*.

the Moscow school of cinematography

filmic training

Orlton West

He who wishes to become an architect or engineer has to undergo a lengthy and organised training before he is allowed to practice; people without any definite qualifications are allowed to make films.

Films continue to be produced largely by guesswork, bluff, and other erratic means.

The Russians were the first to realise the stupidity of all this. Immediately they killed the film as an industrial commodity and re-created it as a social force to be directed with purpose, mere guesswork, and the methods of the circus, failed to produce the required results. It became necessary to train actors and technicians for every particular branch of film production.

And so the Moscow State School of Cinematography was founded. It occupies what was once a Czarist restaurant frequented by Rasputin. Students are accepted to it from all parts of the Soviet Union and the National Minorities, where they are selected from study and critical groups associated with the collective farms, factories, mines and so on.

The Institute provides a three years course of study for actors, cameramen, scenario writers, directors etc.; it is very difficult. The subjects taught include History and Sociology of Art, Dramatic Literature, Science of Photography, Psychology, and many others. Players specialise in Rhythmics, Acrobatics, Costume and the various schools and styles of acting which have grown up with the theatre and which can, to some extent, be utilised by the cinema.

In accordance with the dominant Marxian ideology, theory and practice are combined throughout the course, and are regarded as counterparts, one of the other. The aim is not for examination successes which depend upon the ability of a student to cram his or her head with book knowledge. The training is practical from the very first.

Thus a new student may be requested to serve as Sanitary Inspector of a local factory kitchen. He may be called upon to help plant trees along the streets of Moscow, or organise a news sheet upon some particular subject for the information of his fellow workers.

This serves as training for communal life.

The response to it is watched, discussed, and criticised at committee meetings of the students.

The filmic training is under the direction of instructors, including Pudovkin, Eisenstein, and Nitikin, the actor of "Stump of an Empire." It is their duty to report upon the scholastic progress of the students.

Working in groups of four or five, these young men and women write and produce scenarios, and criticise each others work; and their rate of progress is kept as constant as possible by transferring the more progressive students to the weaker groups, and vice versa. Thus the groups mutually assist one another, and rapidly develop into actual production units.

By serving as extra players in crowd scenes at the local studios, they become familiar with the workings of actual production; and by being drafted out as first, second, third, or even fourth assistants to the various directors, they are able to experience practical studio conditions, and keep in close and constant contact with them. For purposes of study, they are admitted to all cinemas at about half the usual rates.

No student is permitted to attempt a large task until he or she has been thoroughly trained in matters of both form and content.

Mr. H. P. J. Marshall, an Englishman at the Institute, studied very hard for over two years before he was given the job of assisting director Joris Ivens in the making of *Komsomol,* which will probably be shown by the Film Society during its coming season. Now, after almost three years study, Mr. Marshall is working with S. M. Eisenstein.

The interlocking of the various stages of filmic training at the Moscow Institute achieves the closest possible contact between the production apparatus and the society which it serves. Its roots are deeply planted in the Soviet Union. It is no flower-top. Students who go to their homes for the vacation make living contact with distant areas, and bring back with them reports of the cultural needs of their people, and the social problem facing them. The cinema can provide the one, and help to solve the other.

The Institute, and its associated producing organisation thus become the central nervous system of Russia. It is no factory producing for profit.

criticism from the Soviet

letter from H. P. J. Marshall
Evpatoria, Crimea, U.S.S.R.

(Just as we were about to go to press this outspoken letter from one of our Soviet correspondents, H. P. J. Marshall, arrived. Owing to pressure of space we are only able to publish half of it. In this letter Mr. Marshall's strictures refer to the unillustrated former first number published as *film*. This was entirely sold out and out of print seven weeks after publication. Editor.)

Every time a new art or literary journal is born one eagerly seeks out the first number—however limited its circulation (for purposes of advertisement or merely lack of funds) however poor its make up—for whether born in the hothouses of the 'varsities or the mangers of Soho—maybe at last a prophet has come!

And more often than not they're still-born, with the first number or fifth, its all the same. I think of the collection of *Coteries, Quarterlies, Old and New, Experiment, Transition, Blues, Emotionists* and whatnots—more often than not with a small capital letter.

That's a danger signal—lower-case caps have always been pied or dissed! Not that I'm against their use in principle, sometimes—in poetry for instance —they're demanded, just as upper-case caps are not needed because a word happens to start a new line.

So *Film* came to me lower-case—or rather its letter heading—so far I haven't seen the first number. Am A long long way away. Still I must confess that little letter played a big part in my not writing an article for the first number. I could see it lying mid uncut edges or on the mausoleum shelves of a first edition collector.

If lower-case had denoted lower-class protest against upper-class capital—I'd have sent a cablegram! Something vital will come out of that, but often the electric letter is only upper-class hypertrophy—and that outgrowth is decadence.

So I have waited and lo a second number is announced, and one of my old film friends asks me to write for the good of the cause—so here goes.

He suggested I wrote about Soviet films and my studies in the Moscow Cinema Institute—but that little capital letter started me criticising—and criticism should begin at home. Moreover it will clear the air of misapprehensions and illusions which prevent Soviet film art being seen in its true perspective.

"Film"—"an independent magazine of aesthetic film conception"—"Breaff of the 'ot 'ouses an' ye wilde wilde lily"! . . . now as I haven't yet read one number—I can't criticise or praise it—but by its self-chosen title and sub-title I can, insofar as Eisenstein says, "A conflict within a thesis (abstract idea) formulates itself in the dialectics of the title" (*close-up* Vol. VIII. p. 180).

Now in the *Cinema Quarterly* we find a similar thesis projecting itself in the interior conflict of its editorial which wants, inter alia, " to present in an adequate manner the spectator's point-of-view " with " the completest detachment possible " . . . " disinterested . . . remote and unprejudiced " . . . with a " completely open mind " which judging from its title is just what *Film* aims to do—so my criticism applies to both. Verb. sap.

" The completest detachment *possible* " presumes that complete detachment is impossible, that there is a limit to detachment i.e. independence . . . whereas the other phrases presume the opposite! For *relative* detachment is substituted *absolute detach*ment (*dis*-interested, *un*-prejudiced, *completely* open mind); now if that critic could be so isolated in a vacuum it might be postulated that he would then be a vacuum in isolation i.e. a completely open mind, remote unprejudiced, a blank uninfluenced O. Reductio ad absurdum.

A critic is a citizen of society, and his position in that society will determine his point-of-view, his interests, his prejudices, his world-outlook.

The differences and similarities of points-of-view and consequently of criticism results from man's practical struggle of mastering directly or indirectly the external world, and therewith his own internal conflicts. Practice varies according to the social-economic conditions of men. The position and practice of the employer is different from that of the employee, the renter from the worker, the exploiter from the exploited. One controls and the other fulfils. One consumes more than he produces and the other produces more than he consumes. So one is a parasite and the other a drone.

Because one is a class that owns or has hegemony over the means of production (power, factories, transport, machines etc.,) or over money which can buy or control these (the capitalists) and the other owns only its own labour power, which it is forced to sell to those that own everything besides labour power (the proletariat).

So the differences in relation to the means of production produces different relationships of classes, and consequently different points-of-views, desires, moods, criticisms etc. These contradict each other, conflict, just as the economic conditions do, and because they do.

So that all forms of social life and thought (philosophy, science, art, etc.,) are conditioned, influenced, permeated by a definite point-of-view, which in its turn depends on the economic conditions of society, on class relationships. So that every point-of-view world-outlook is a class-outlook.

(to be continued).

book review

FILM

Robert Fairthorne

Books on film as art generally consist of a collection of stills and critiques of well know films, with a little theory thrown in to make it more difficult. The latter part sometimes shows, the influence of the White Knight who, it may be recalled, was wont to dye his whiskers green, and then to use so large a fan that could ne'er be seen. This book is free from the taint of such a collaboration. It contains illustrations that really do illustrate the text, the argument is from the concrete to the abstract, the style is straightforward, and words are used with their ordinary meanings. This is no small measure due to the ability of the translators.

Though the latest of a long series, the book is essentially a pioneer. In plan it resembles that neglected work, Buckle's *The Mind and the Film,* published in 1926, but far surpasses it in achievement. In fact, its very merits may be dangerous, for they hide the narrowness of the path which Arnheim explores so thoroughly. Out of all visual experience, ranging from pattern on one extreme to the printed word on the other, with representational ('photographic') events in the middle, he confines himself entirely to the last. This would be no criticism if the book had been given a less general title. As it is, Arheim's conclusions are not usually applicable even to such ordinary film phenomena as cartoon films and the use of titles.

Underlying his arguments are two general aesthetic principles. First, it is only by defective representation of nature that an art can be an art at all. A line drawing is preferable to a painted statue. Second, an art must be true to its own nature. Coupled with this is the principle of Economy, an aesthetic objection to the breaking of eggs with sledge hammers.

The first principle is treated at length elsewhere in this issue. In all essentials Arnheim and Torahiko Terada agree. The application of colour and stereoscopy to the naturalistic dramatic film will certainly destroy the potentialities of the more fluid, because less realistic, film of today. Arnheim is haunted by the hybrid horrors which may come from some Hollywood branch of the Island of Dr. Moreau. He has good reason for his fears.

Outside the dramatic film there seems to be no aesthetic objection to colour, sound, and solidity, in whole or part. There is no fundamental reason why they should be used only for giving an exact copy of nature, though there are several very earthly reasons for it. Uniform tinting (e.g. greenish-blue scenes for evening romances) is a crude example of non-redundant colour. Even with present day colour processes the director has control over three independent factors. These are, the objects photographed, the colour filters, and the final dyes. The director has nearly as much control as the painter. So with stereoscopy, images might still be confined to surfaces, but these surfaces would not be tied to the screen. A mix or fade on these lines would be interesting, as would be a film with almost imperceptible colour, or with colour that gradually appeared.

Arnheim makes a determined attack on the problem of sound, in which he manages to survey most techniques, actual or possible. His treatment of fundamentals in sound films asks for careful analysis. He argues that the

film version of the visible world is a mere shadow of reality, while the film version of sound is the sound itself. Hence the visual film is a far richer art medium than is the (recorded) sound film. Also, though appearance is a continuous quality of natural objects, sound is merely occasional. Acoustic art applied to drama must therefore be discontinuous. These arguments imply that sound, a quality of actions, is parallel with appearance, a quality of objects.

Again, he finds certain structural differences between sight and sound, in that simultaneous sounds overlap, though simultaneous sights do not. This seems to be a confusion between geometry and psychology. The relative position of objects cannot be perceived unless simultaneous visual impressions overlap.

In fairness to the author, and to those for whom 'theoretical' is an adjective of abuse, it must be stated that most of the book is essentially practical. As a handbook of film technique it is far better than Pudovkin's treatise. Curiously enough, although the possibilities of the camera are treated at length, there is no mention of the possibilities of the photographic emulsion (e.g. chemical control of tone; use of negative).

The treatment of montage is best indicated by the title of the chapter, *Artistic Utilisation of the Absence of the Space-Time Continuum*. This is building on rock instead of words. He shows that the power of the film to create a new 'here-and-now' on the screen, out of the 'there-and-then' of the natural world, and the power to create the motions of Mickey Mouse, spring from the same source. Both are the results of arrangement, but the arrangements are of different things. Mercifully, the word 'montage' is used in its ordinary sense, that is the manipulation of sequence and duration to create the desired effect. He does not overlook the fact that the results of such manipulations can themselves be manipulated.

The book contains a remarkable study of the film as it is, inevitably of pathological interest. With devastating sanity the author lays bare the essential baseness behind superficially 'moral' and 'decent' films. We are given no judgment on the ethical values of that great family attraction, *Sunshine Susie,* but other examples prove more than adequate. There is a delightful catalogue of outworn film clichés.

Throughout Arnheim insists that film is an experimental art, not a branch of metaphysics. Thus amateur producers will find innumerable suggestions for experiment to be carried into practice. On the other hand, the chapter on Subject and Form ranks in permanent aestethic value with Sir Henry Hadow's classic essay on Musical Form.

If Arnheim has written of the dramatic film only, and his work is of the camera and for the camera, there is need for such work, and he has gone far to satisfy it. There are many other branches of film, but in contemporary Western culture the dramatic film is dominant, artistically, economically, and socially.

ROBERT FAIRTHORNE.

THE MAGNIFICENT by Terence Greenidge. Faber & Faber, 7/6. We do not propose to review novels, but we have received for review a copy of this book. Terence Greenidge, the author, is contributing to future numbers of *film art*. *The Magnificent* is a rather curious mixture of Socialism, Homosexuality, and life as a film actor in the English studios. In the sections dealing with English film production it can clearly be seen that the latter is similar to a much boosted machine which keeps going wrong.

B. B.

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